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ABSTRACT

This document consists of the first 15 consecutive issues of a newsletter published by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs (The Academy), a division of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The newsletter focuses on providing information and feedback on early childhood programs for early childhood professionals, directors, validators, and commissioners involved with accreditation. Regular features include: "Direct Assistance" and "Feedback for Validators," including tips. Feature articles include: (1) "Accreditation Helps Raise Salaries"; (2) "Quality = Risk Management"; (3) "PBS Documentary Promotes Accreditation"; (4) "Why Accreditation?"; (5) "Academy Launches Media Campaign"; (6) "Ignoring Racial and Cultural Differences May Encourage Prejudice in Young Children"; (7) "What Does High Quality Child Care Really Cost?"; (8) "Accreditation: A Shaggy Dog Story" (Ellen Khokha); (9) "New Corporate Funding to Improve Child Care and Support Accreditation"; (10) "Congress Finally Remembers the Children"; (11) "Caring for Children in Time of War" (Sue Bredekamp); and (12) "AT&T Funds for Accreditation." Other topics covered include: self-studies, validation visits, classroom observations, parent education, developmentally appropriate practice, curriculum, staff recruitment, anti-discrimination policies, toy safety, and complaint policies. (BGC)

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Academy Update

(Early Childhood Professionals Collaborating for Quality), 1986-1992

v1 n1 Fall 1986 - v6 n2 Win/Spr 1992

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ACADEMY Update

Early childhood professionals collaborating for quality

Volume 1 Number 1 Fall 1986

PS 023954

Academy Update

Early childhood professionals collaborating for quality

Academy Update is published by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, a division of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. The Academy administers the only professionally sponsored, national, voluntary accreditation system for preschools, child care centers, and school-age child care programs. The Academy's purpose is to improve and recognize the quality of care and education provided for young children in early childhood programs. *Academy Update* supports this goal by providing early childhood professionals, including directors, validators, and commissioners, involved in accreditation with current information and feedback on the system.

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The Academy welcomes your comments. Address them to

National Academy of
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1834 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20009
202-232-8777 800-424-2460

naeyc

Did You Know?

Our 1st Anniversary

During our first year of operation, the Academy

- supported more than 900 programs, from 46 states, in the self-study process
- trained 1100 validators
- accredited 122 programs representing 30 states and the District of Columbia

Alaska	2						
Alabama	1						
Arizona	2						
California	18						
Colorado	1						
Connecticut	2						
District of Columbia	2						
Florida	4						
Georgia	1						
Hawaii	2						
Illinois	6						
Indiana	1	Maryland	2	New York	4	Tennessee	2
Kansas	3	Michigan	3	Ohio	13	Texas	20
Kentucky	1	Minnesota	5	Oklahoma	2	Virginia	11
Louisiana	1	New Jersey	3	Oregon	1	Washington	4
Massachusetts	2	New Mexico	1	Pennsylvania	1	Wyoming	1

Accolades to Accredited Programs!

Accredited programs deserve recognition. To promote their achievement, the Academy provides each accredited program with a full-color poster depicting components of a high quality early childhood program, a gold-embossed certificate suitable for framing, a 3-year supply of parent brochures explaining accreditation (more may be ordered at 3¢ each), camera-ready logos to use on stationery or brochures; and a sample news release to submit to media.

We Need Your Feedback

New York Mayor Ed Koch, a dynamic and outgoing leader, is famous for always asking his constituents, "How'm I doin'?" Mayor Koch seeks feedback on his job performance.

As a developing and dynamic organization, the Academy, like Mayor Koch, needs feedback on its performance. We need to hear from directors, validators, and Affiliate Groups on the success of our efforts to improve the quality of care and education for young children in early childhood programs. Please send us your comments. How did you first learn about accreditation? How has accreditation been promoted in your community? How can the Academy promote accreditation? In addition to your comments, we'd like to know what others are saying about accreditation. We would appreciate receiving copies of articles from newspapers, magazines, or books that refer to NAEYC's accreditation system.

What's Developmentally Appropriate Practice?

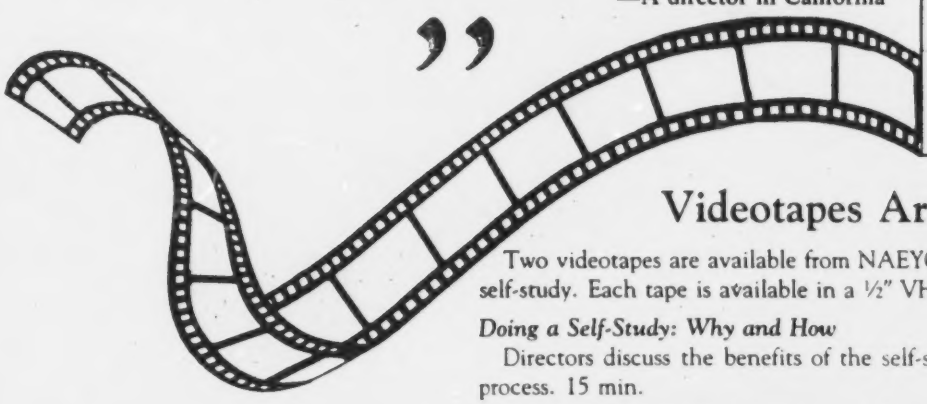
Would you like to know more about appropriate and inappropriate practices in early childhood programs? If so, be sure to read the September 1986 issue of *Young Children*. It contains NAEYC's position statement, "Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs." This position statement describes developmentally appropriate practice for administrators, teachers, parents, policy makers, and others who make decisions about the care and education of young children.

"*We felt the self-evaluations were helpful in our effort to look at our program in an objective manner. They stimulated discussion of what changes might benefit the children and helped to clarify some areas for the teachers regarding our philosophy.*"

—A director in California

Getting More Parent to Parent M gs

One innovative director reports 85% of the parents in her program show up for parent meetings! Her secret is she provides a light supper for parents and children at closing time. She pays staff overtime to supervise children while the meeting is held in an empty classroom. (Parents can be charged a small fee to cover costs.) Parents love the convenience and staff appreciate the increase in parent enthusiasm!



Videotapes Are Available

Two videotapes are available from NAEYC to help directors and staff conduct a self-study. Each tape is available in a ½" VHS format for $39.

Doing a Self-Study: Why and How

Directors discuss the benefits of the self-study and ways to involve staff in the process. 15 min.

Using the Early Childhood Classroom Observation

How to use the observation scale when rating classrooms. 26 min. (This tape is used in validator training.)

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Director Assistance

Need Help with Your Self-Study?

Some directors feel anxious after they examine their box of self-study materials. "It looks so complicated! Where will I find the time?" Some directors are confused about how to begin the process, what to do if a criterion isn't met, or how to interpret a certain criterion.

This issue of *Academy Update* addresses these concerns and should make the self-study easier for you.

How do I begin?

Begin your self-study by carefully reading the instructions in the *Guide to Accreditation*. Don't let the book's size overwhelm you! Each of the seven sections in the *Guide* contains only a few pages of directions. (Only 32 of the book's 225 pages are instructions on completing the self-study process.) Read these directions thoroughly so you have an overall picture of the self-study. Don't miss the Task and Timeline Chart on pages 11 to 13. This chart will help you develop your own plan for completing each task in the self-study. Make the self-study work for you.

Note the Open-Ended Surveys

You'll find an Open-Ended Staff Survey on pages 94 to 99 and an Open-Ended Parent Survey on pages 109 to 112. These optional surveys are for programs to copy and give to parents and staff for use as a "pre-test." The surveys give directors feedback on aspects of the program that directly affect parents and staff. Questions cover the quality of communication among staff and administrators, evaluations of staff job performance, and the methods for keeping parents informed about their child's experience. The surveys provide directors with a baseline of information on the effectiveness of current systems of communication and areas that may need improvement. The Open-Ended Surveys are for your use only and are *not* required by the Academy.

How to use the Staff and Parent Questionnaires

Report information from staff and parents using the Staff and Parent Questionnaires provided with the self-study materials. The questionnaires can be used in different ways depending on the individual needs of your program. Discuss topics generated from the questionnaires at a staff or parent meeting, answer questions in newsletters, or use the questionnaires as a guide for orienting new staff and parents. The questionnaires can be used as a "post-test" to assess perceptions of staff and parents of program changes *after* they have been made. Questionnaires should be completed no more than 3 months before the Program Description is sent to the Academy to be sure the results represent the current situation.

Use the Administrator Report as a workbook

Directors should use the Administrator Report (the light green form) as a workbook to evaluate their performance against the Criteria. Directors are encouraged to write notes, reminders, or rationale for each rating of [1] or [2] appearing on the Administrator Report. Remember—no one but the director will see this report! After improvements are made, directors transfer their ratings onto Part 3— Results of the Administrator Report in the Program Description beginning on page 40. Use the "Director's Rating" column on each page for the director's ratings and comments on criteria that are not met.

View the process as a "take-home test"

You may alleviate some of your anxiety about the self-study if you look at it as a "take-home test." Keep in mind you have as much time as you want to examine your program and make needed changes! You determine how much time and money to invest in making improvements as you evaluate your program against the Criteria. You decide when to submit your Program Description to the Academy and when to invite validators to visit your program. You are in control.

Aim for high quality, not perfection!

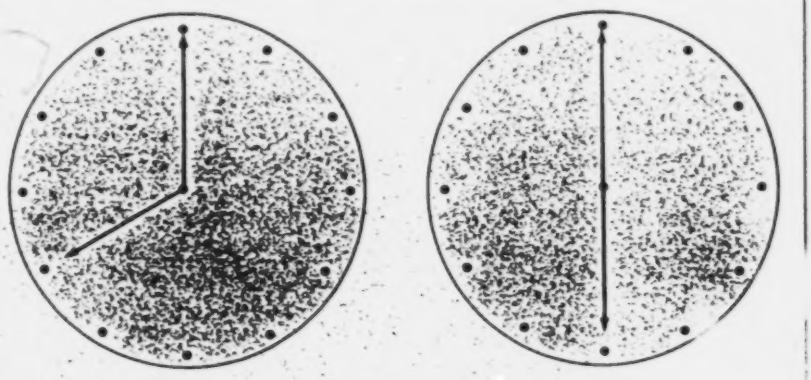
The most common myth about accreditation is that programs must meet all the Criteria to be accredited. This is not true! The Criteria represent high standards of quality in early childhood programs. The accreditation system is designed for different kinds of programs. When programs don't meet a criterion, directors explain why the criterion is not met or how the criterion is met in a different way. The Commission decides whether to grant accreditation based upon professional judgment. Commissioners consider all aspects of the program and award accreditation based upon substantial compliance with the Academy's Criteria. A center with 100% compliance is rare and not expected. You don't have to be perfect!

More Director Assistance on pages 4 and 5

Remember These Important Steps When You Prepare Your Program Description

- After you and your teachers finish your observations, compare your ratings on each criterion. Discuss any differences and come to an agreement on one rating. This rating is *not* an average of your own and your teachers' ratings, but a whole number representing your group's consensus on the item. Report the rating for each classroom on the Classroom Observation Summary Sheet.
- Do *not* write the ratings for your center under "Ratings of Center and Validator" in the right-hand column of Part 2 in the Program Description. The validator enters these ratings only for classrooms observed during the visit.
- Write the results from the Staff and Parent Questionnaires in the appropriate boxes in the right-hand column on Part 3 of the Program Description *before* you mail it to the Academy.
- The Commission makes a "blind" decision on your program. Do not write the name of your center in the Program Description or use any last names.
- If you must include attachments, delete any identifying references to your program. Please keep attachments brief.
- Include job titles for staff when filling in staff qualifications in the Center Profile on pages 10 to 12.
- Please write legibly and in black ink!
- When you are ready to submit your Program Description, mail it to the Academy along with the Classroom Observation Summary Sheet and a check for the Validation Fee. (The director keeps the Parent and Staff Questionnaire Summary Sheets.)

> *"Our validator was extremely thorough, while taking pains to allay our nervous tension."*
>
> —A director in Texas



Getting Ready for Your Validation Visit

Here are some tips from directors and validators for having a successful validation visit.

- Make it a normal day! Do not plan special activities to show your validator. Follow your usual routines as much as possible, and try to relax.
- Validators will not observe all classrooms, so prepare staff for the possibility that their room may not be observed.
- Validators may need to spend time interviewing lead teachers about unobserved items. Validators and teachers need to arrange time for an interview away from classroom activities. The director will arrange to cover the classroom for that brief period.
- The director comments on all nonvalidated items at the end of the visit. Keep in mind that *nonvalidated* (NV) means there is a *difference* between your rating and the validator's rating. NV does not mean the criterion isn't met. It could mean the validator rated you higher than you rated yourself. The validator's task is to give you an opportunity to comment about or explain the rating differences.
- The validation visit takes time. Plan to be at the center all day—from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Frequently Asked Questions

When directors ask Academy staff about the Criteria, we usually begin by asking, "What are you doing in your program? What does your staff think? Do you have a problem with the way it's being done?" We follow the motto, "If it's not broken, don't fix it." For example, if you have developed a system for staff breaks which works well for your staff but isn't exactly like criterion E-11, then you don't need to change it. The Academy is not trying to make all programs look the same.

What is a long-range, written curriculum plan? (Criterion B-1)

Once again, we ask, "What do you have now?" *Long range* for some programs means a *month* of planned activities. For others, it means a *year*. A "... curriculum plan" for some centers is detailed and comprehensive describing a particular philosophy ... approach to child development. For other programs, it is a concise goal statement and a daily schedule. Always refer to *Accreditation Criteria and Procedures* (the green book) for interpretation of Criteria.

What if staff do not meet the qualifications?

Directors pursuing accreditation are often concerned when staff do not meet the qualifications on page 19 of the green book. The training requirements listed are high standards and are considered important determinants of positive outcomes for children. Staff qualifications are weighed by Commissioners as one of the Criteria. Because the interactions among staff and children and the curriculum are observed, they are weighed more heavily. Staff interaction with children is emphasized more than staff credentials. The director uses the charts on pages 10 to 12 of the Program Description to describe *the training that staff do have*. ECE/CD units are computed by figuring out the number of hours a staff member has participated in early childhood/child development related workshops, courses, or in-service training. An ECE/CD unit is equal to 16 classroom hours or 1 semester hour of study. Many staff are pleasantly surprised at how much training they've had when they complete their worksheets (from page 77 of the *Guide*) on staff qualifications.

What if we don't have a playground?

When a program doesn't have a playground, it can report how it meets children's needs for outdoor time and vigorous physical activity in other ways. Do you regularly take children to a nearby park? Do you have a gymnasium or large room for playing games or doing exercises? If so, report this on your Program Description.

> *"There needs to be real sensitivity on the part of the validators about the pressure the teachers feel. In talking to teachers about the program, great care and respect for the teacher should be shown . . ."*
>
> —A director in Hawaii

Add Accreditation Experience to Your Résumé

Directors and teachers should note on their résumés their participation in self-study and accreditation. The accreditation system is nationally recognized. Staff involved in the accreditation process demonstrate initiative, a desire for self-improvement, and a commitment to high quality care for children. Employers of early childhood professionals, throughout the country, appreciate qualities like these when hiring. You've grown professionally through your experience in self-study and accreditation—take advantage of it and list it on your résumé!

Feedback for Validators

Anticipating Your First Visit?

If you haven't been contacted by the Academy to do a validation visit you may want to know how visits are arranged. Assignment of validators is based on a number of variables—distance, background of validator, availability, and conflict of interest guidelines. Validators are generally asked to travel no more than 100 miles from home, although on some occasions the distance may be greater. Also, the Academy attempts to match the type of program with the validator's experience. For example, a validator with Montessori experience might validate a Montessori center, and a validator with infant experience might validate a program that enrolls infants.

Validators are required to report any conflicts of interest that might make it impossible for them to fairly validate a program. Potential conflicts of interest include situations such as the validator previously was employed or sought employment by the program, had a child enrolled in the program, serves on an advisory board to the program, operates a program in direct competition, and so forth. The Academy provides directors with a list of potential validators when arranging a date for the visit. Directors should report any conflicts of interest at this time.

The availability of validators can make arrangements for visits difficult. After a director chooses the best date(s) for the validation visit, the Academy then calls validators. Often a validator isn't able to do a visit because of conflicts in schedules. Sometimes we call validators at home and find their phone is disconnected. Or we call validators at work and discover they're no longer there. We may have tried to call you but haven't been successful. If you move or change jobs, please notify us. Be sure to let us know if you want to be removed from our list of trained validators.

Validators Are Not Evaluators

Validators are early childhood professionals who have been specially trained to verify the accuracy of the Program Description prior to submitting it to the Commission. Validators are

- peers of program personnel
- objective observers
- collectors of information—the "eyes and ears" of the Commission

"

Since our training, we both had big changes in our lives . . . and panicked at first studying the materials again ('Oh no, why did we agree to do this!'). Panic was unnecessary. Some familiarity with the materials, and having certain pages (such as 202 to 206 in the Guide) always at our fingertips, made it go very smoothly. Validating was a stimulating professional experience for us. Just another of the benefits of the whole process. It made me so eager for us to begin our own self-study!

—A validator in Oklahoma

"

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Tips for Validators

- Be prepared. Review materials from the training.
- Practice using the Classroom Observation in your own center to become familiar with each criterion and its location.
- Take a clipboard and black pens with you on your visit.
- Be friendly, smile, and help put program staff at ease!
- Keep your sense of humor! One director reported on the day of her visit a lamb decided her foot was a good place to go to the bathroom. Everyone had a good laugh.
- Acknowledge the program's effort and work accomplished in completing the self-study.
- You are *not* a consultant to the program!
- Don't compare the program to your own.
- Remember to base your ratings on the child's experience.
- Arrange a convenient time to talk with teachers about unobserved items. Do not talk with them when they are involved with classroom duties. Remember to make your ratings on unobserved items *after* interviewing the teacher.
- Don't ask questions about the program out of curiosity; only ask questions that relate to the Criteria.
- Try to peek in every classroom. All staff have made a contribution to the self-study. Your brief presence will show you appreciate this fact.
- If you get off schedule during the visit, be sure to spend at least 1 hour observing in each classroom. You can make up time by trusting the comprehensiveness of the self-study and by checking documents more quickly.
- Begin your discussion of nonvalidated items with the director on a positive note. Congratulate the director for undertaking the self-study and point out areas of agreement between your ratings and hers. Smile and provide eye contact. You are a peer of the director!
- Refer to nonvalidated criteria as "differences," and explain to the director that nonvalidated does *not* mean not met.
- Record the results of the discussion with the director in a clear and objective manner. Write down reasons for your rating (what you saw) and the director's explanation.
- You are the "eyes and the ears" of the Commission. Write clear and unambiguous comments. (See the boxed examples.)
- Don't raise false expectations about accreditation. Don't tell the director you would or would not accredit the program. The Commission makes the accreditation decision.
- Try to achieve positive closure at the end of the day. Acknowledge all the time, effort, and energy the program has spent on the self-study.
- Maintain confidentiality!
- Validators mail all Classroom Observation books back to the Academy with the Validated Program Description.
- This is a collaborative process. If you have questions call us before, during, or after the visit. Our office hours are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. EST.

Examples of Clear and Unclear Comments from Program Descriptions

Unclear comments	Clear comments
Children sat for too long	Children sat in large group for story from 10:10 to 10:45 a.m.
Some creative art	One teacher set up easels for painting with help from a few children while another teacher demonstrated how to play the violin. No artwork displayed on walls. No record player.
Mealtime was horrible!	Teachers prepared plates for all children and stood up during meal. Children were asked to be quiet during lunch and had to raise their hands for second helpings.
Language development not encouraged	Teacher mostly asked questions with one- or two-word answers. Very few open-ended questions. Teacher talked at groups of children most of the time.
Regimented transitions	Heard no warnings before transitions, just announcements when it was time to change activities. Children lined up to go outside, to lunch, and to the bathroom.

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See You at the NAEYC Conference in Washington, D.C. November 13 to 16

Look for these sessions on accreditation

Information meeting

A general information session about NAEYC's national, voluntary accreditation system—the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs—will be held on Friday, November 14 at 11:30 a.m. Directors are encouraged to attend to find out how their programs can become accredited and the benefits of accreditation for programs and the profession.

How to do a self-study: directors share successful accreditation experiences

A how-to session for achieving accreditation will be held on Friday, November 14 at 4:00 p.m. Directors whose programs are involved in self-study will have the opportunity to share experiences and obtain technical assistance from Academy staff and other directors who have completed the process.

Refresher validator training

A refresher training session for Academy validators will be held on Friday, November 14 from 1:00 to 3:30 p.m. This session is *only* for previously trained validators. It is not required, however validators find it very helpful to practice their skills between visits and to share experiences with other validators and Academy staff.

Did You See?

The September 1986 issue of *Better Homes and Gardens* carried an article for parents on how to choose child care. Parents were told to look for an Academy-accredited center!

An Early Holiday Present for You

The first 1,000 centers enrolled in self-study will receive a *free* copy of NAEYC's new book, *Developmentally Appropriate Practice* when it is published late this fall. The book is also an NAEYC Comprehensive Membership Benefit.

ACADEMY *Update*

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Volume 1 Number 2 Winter 1987

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Accreditation Helps Raise Salaries

George Farrell, Director of University View Child Care Center (UVCCC) in Fairfax, Virginia, one of the first centers to be accredited by the Academy, used the center's new accreditation status as a vehicle to propose salary increases for the staff. He compared his staff members' salaries and found that they were not keeping pace with similar professions in the county and were falling behind comparable centers in the Office for Children Subsidy Program. UVCCC is part of the Salvation Army and their board determines salaries. Farrell wrote a professional request for salary increases showing the need and proposing solutions. For instance, one chart points out the educational qualifications and years of experience of the teachers and their longevity at UVCCC. With the assistance of a parent, he devised a salary scale with step increases to encourage teachers to continue their work. The Board approved the salary compensation plan as proposed. The overall increase is approximately 20% which includes step and once-a-year increases. This plan places UVCCC salaries at the top with similar agencies in their area.

Don't Be Misled

As the Academy becomes more well-known, the number of individuals and organizations offering training and technical assistance related to accreditation will increase. Whereas the Academy encourages programs involved in self-study to solicit training and technical assistance from individuals and organizations, as needed, programs should be aware of the following:

1. The Academy *does not* endorse and *is not* responsible for the training and technical assistance offered by consultants/organizations.
2. No training program can guarantee a positive accreditation decision.
3. Only Academy staff are authorized to officially represent NAEYC in interpreting the accreditation Criteria and procedures as established by the NAEYC Governing Board.

In order to maintain the integrity of NAEYC's accreditation system, and to prevent misunderstandings, the Academy encourages consultants/training programs to use a disclaimer when providing training and technical assistance to programs in self-study. The following sample disclaimer may be adapted to individual needs.

SAMPLE DISCLAIMER

_____ (Consultant) is not connected with, or endorsed by, the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, a division of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Training and technical assistance provided by _____ (Consultant) cannot guarantee a positive accreditation decision.

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Director Assistance

Need Help with Classroom Observations?

Develop reliability in ratings of classrooms

Develop reliability among classroom observers by explaining ratings this way:

- a rating of 3 means there is a *great deal of evidence* that the criterion is met (it doesn't say perfect!)—the behavior occurs most of the time
- a rating of 2 means there is *some evidence* that the criterion is met—the behavior occurs some of the time/often
- a rating of 1 means there is *little evidence* that the criterion is met (it doesn't say never)—the behavior seldom occurs.

Ratings should be based on the child's experience. Consider the following example for rating criterion **A-1. Staff interact frequently with children showing affection and respect.**

> A classroom has two teachers. One teacher is affectionate and interacts frequently with children. The other teacher rarely smiles at children and only occasionally touches or holds them.

Do staff interact frequently with children showing affection and respect? From the child's perspective, the answer would be *some of the time*. This criterion would rate a 2.

Use others to observe

During your self-study you may want to consider using parents, board members, or other teachers to observe classrooms. Some programs ask consultants to observe and provide feedback. The *Guide to Accreditation* suggests that the director and teacher observe and rate each classroom. Having more than one observer improves your chance of a successful validation experience. Remember that the goal of accreditation is to improve programs through collaboration and trust—make the system work for you.

Arriving at consensus ratings

Programs receive two observation forms for each classroom. One for the director (assistant director, program coordinator, parent, board member, or other designated person) and one for the lead teacher. The director and lead teacher are asked to make independent observations, compare their ratings, and come to a consensus on one rating. The process of comparing ratings, identifying strengths, and making improvements in weak areas can be rewarding. Remember that consensus ratings reported on the Classroom Observation Summary Sheet should reflect your best effort in meeting the Criteria.

What to Expect of Your Validators

Don't be disappointed if your validator doesn't spend a lot of time telling you and your staff how wonderful your program is. Validators are trained to be verifiers of information, not evaluators of your program. Their task is to rate the quality of the classrooms they observe and compare their ratings to your ratings. When the ratings agree, the criterion is validated. When the ratings do not agree, the validator is required to interview the director to discuss the difference in ratings and record the results of that discussion on the Program Description for the Commission. It may seem as if all the validator does is talk about the areas of difference. That is because the validator does not need to discuss the validated criteria with you. But don't forget that a validated rating of 3 is a positive statement. Validators do not make the accreditation decision, so they should not subjectively discuss their positive feelings about your program. Explain to your staff that positive feedback will come from the Commission decision—accreditation for your program!

Success in Completing Parent Questionnaires

Are you concerned that parents won't return the Parent Questionnaire? Temple Day Care in Seattle accomplished the task of getting parents to fill out the questionnaire by having coffee available on two consecutive days during arrival and pick-up time. It worked! Virtually all the questionnaires were completed immediately, and the parents enjoyed those few extra minutes at the center. It seems as if the parents didn't have to get to work after all!

Videotapes May Not Be Previewed

NAEYC videotapes may not be previewed prior to purchase. Videotapes are priced very low to make them affordable to more people. Allowing individuals or groups to preview videotapes would increase their cost significantly.

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"We don't meet all of the Criteria! Can we become accredited?"

answer that question
: November 1986 issue of *Young*
n. The article by Sue Bredekamp
emy Director) and Peggy Apple
reditation decisions. "How Early
iood Programs Get Accredited:
nalysis of Accreditation Deci-
provides information on the first
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iestions: 1. What is the basis on
programs are accredited and de-
2. What criteria are frequently
:t in accredited and deferred pro-

ctors reading this article said it
ielped them clarify what commis-
were looking for when evalu-
programs. One director com-
d, "I gave copies of this article to
ir [redacted] help them understand the
[redacted] is the best information

A quick summary of findings

Which criteria do commissioners weigh most heavily?—[redacted]y of interactions among staff and children and curriculum. Which criteria do programs most frequently not meet?—staffing and staff qualifications. Which criteria are most frequently *not* met in *all* programs?—handwashing (criteria **H-14a** and **H-17c**) and cultural diversity (criteria **B-5a** and **B-7h**).

To obtain a copy of this article you may

- contact your local library
- request a reprint for $2 from NAEYC's Editorial Department
- obtain this and other back issues of *Young Children* from NAEYC for $4 per copy

All NAEYC orders for less than $20 must be prepaid.

rectors of Accredited Programs Receive Requests

v directors of accredited programs find themselves inundated with requests hers to visit the center, or share their accreditation experience. The Acad- courages this activity but does not want you to feel obligated to showcase your a. We know that it takes extra time to take guests on tours and/or talk with bout your program. Set your own limits for these activities. Let us know if you ant your program s name publicized.

> *"nu follow the self-study process as set up 'he materials, it will go very smoothly—it flowed!"*
>
> —A director in Washington

Timelines

Self-study: how long should it take?

How much time should you spend on your self-study? Programs report completing the self-study in 4 to 6 months . . . you'll never be perfect! Set realistic goals and timelines for accomplishing tasks and work on them regularly. Changes are frequent in most early childhood programs, and rarely will a self-study be completed with all the same children, staff, and families. The accreditation process is designed to anticipate changes in your Program Description. Don't wait. Set a date now and go for it!

We need 6 weeks notice to set up a visit

The Academy's goal is to arrange a validation visit within 30 working days of receiving your Program Description. If you want to ensure a validation visit in the spring, the Academy *must* receive your Program Description 30 working days (or 6 weeks) prior to the date you'd like a visit. This is a very busy time for Academy staff because so many programs want visits before their program closes in May or June. In order to meet the diverse needs of programs and validators, staff must have adequate time to arrange visits. Avoid the spring rush—request your visit in the summer or fall.

When will you be notified of the accreditation decision?

Commissions meet every 8 to 10 weeks. For your program to be considered at a Commission meeting, your visit must occur at least 3½ weeks prior to the meeting. Most programs wait 1 to 2 months for their decision.

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Feedback for Validators

Tips for Validators

- Call the Academy immediately if you're scheduled to do a visit and you can't! We'll either change the date to meet your needs, or get someone else to do the visit.
- Please call to notify us if you don't receive materials for your visit at least 2 days in advance.
- We cannot overemphasize the importance of being prepared for your visit. Remember to call 202-232-8777 or 800-424-2460 (8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. EST) prior to, during, or after your visit with questions or concerns.
- In winter, absenteeism may be high. Approximately ⅔ of the enrolled children should be present to conduct a visit.
- If you were trained in 1985, please note a change in the decision rule for validating Staff Questionnaires (see the *Guide to Accreditation*, p. 202). The rule states, "For a rating of [3] to be validated, at least 75% of the staff must rate the item a [3] and no staff member can rate it a [1] (when there are at least four staff members)." Please delete and do *not* apply the following: "No staff member can rate it a [1]."
- When validating criterion E-8. **Accident protection and liability insurance coverage is maintained for children and adults,** please note that you are to *check the present policy and/or most recent canceled check or receipt for payment.*
- Follow this format when writing comments from the director interview:

  For Director Only: The director uses this column to write comments on ratings before the Program Description is submitted to the Academy.

  Ratings of Center & Validator: The validator uses this column to record the conversation with the director on all nonvalidated items. The validator writes a V before the comments on her or his own observations, and a D before the director's response to a nonvalidated item. See the example below:

Comments from Director Interview

B. Curriculum *continued* — For Director Only

CRITERION

B-4c. The daily schedule provides a balance of individual/small group/large group activities.

AVERAGE RATING: 3

Director's comments on rating Most program activities are conducted in small groups compatible with needs.

FOR VALIDATOR ONLY

Ratings of Center & Validator

GROUPS													
AM		PM											
C	V	C	V	C	V	C	V	C	V	C	V	C	V
3	2	3	2										

VALIDATION DECISION ☐ V ☑ NV

For validator V- 45 min., child-initiated activity (including 20 min. outside). Small group was 90 min. and large group activity 15 min.

D- Our interpretation of individual is whenever a child is working on an activity which meets the child's needs.

anks to You—It's Working!

ted Way slogan can certainly be applied to validators. If it weren't for the n of hundreds of trained validators volunteering time and energy, the on system wouldn't be possible. NAEYC appreciates your generous effort ds your dedication to improving the lives of children and their families in rams throughout the country!

"

ally helped to have the director nize all the documents. She put them iles which were labeled with each erion.

—A validator in Michigan

"

Agreeing to Do a Visit

ve call to ask you to do a visit, stop a minute and consider the task and your before saying "yes." Validation visits are time consuming and require n and concentration. Although we do appreciate your eagerness to serve as r, please don't agree to do a visit if it's a stressful time for you. Just explain tion and we'll gladly call you again.

What It Means to Be a Validator

ly a lawyer sought expert testimony from an individual with early child- ertise—specifically, he wanted an Academy validator. The lawyer wanted credibility for his client through association with NAEYC's accreditation

nts such as this make it necessary to clarify what it means to be a validator. s are selected for training by the Academy because they have knowledge rtise in early childhood education. Validator training qualifies individuals n the tasks of validation. The validator in the above situation was qualified is an expert witness because of her early childhood experience, not because a validator. It is important to point out that you are only an official of the Academy when you are conducting a validation visit at our

New Number?

New home or new job? Please notify us of your new phone number. We call to arrange validation visits during the day and we need your current work phone. Too often, we "lose" validators when they change jobs.

New Video Now Available

"*Celebrating Early Childhood Teachers*," one of NAEYC's newest video resources, is now available for purchase! Premiered at the 1986 NAEYC Conference, this public education videotape depicts early childhood professionals at work, caring for and educating young children from birth through age 8 in a variety of settings. The video highlights early childhood teachers performing work that is vital to the well-being of young children, their families, and the larger society. This video presents the joys of teaching young children and also describes the obstacles that make it increasingly difficult to recruit and retain qualified early childhood teachers. Low salaries are the primary obstacle.

To order this videotape, send $39 for the ½" VHS format (NAEYC #860) or $50 for the ¾" format (NAEYC #861) to Celebrating Early Childhood Teachers, NAEYC, 1834 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20009. Or call 202-232-8777 or 800-424-2460. No shipping charges are added to prepaid orders!

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Did You Know?

L.A. Businesses Support Child Care and Accreditation

The Alliance of Businesses for Childcare Development (ABCD) is a nonprofit consortium of business leaders in Los Angeles that was created to address the lack of child care facilities downtown. First Interstate Bank, Security Pacific Bank, Bullock Department Stores, the Times Mirror Company, and the City of Los Angeles are members of the consortium and are actively raising $2 million to fund four facilities to serve nearly 400 children. ABCD uses corporate contributions to launch independent centers that will eventually be self-supporting. To ensure high quality care, programs are encouraged to pursue accreditation from NAEYC.

Seattle Center Improves Through Self-Study

One benefit of accreditation is increased parent involvement and pride. University Baptist Preschool in Seattle actively involved parents in their self-study and used their newsletter to thank them for contributing to improvements identified in the process. The newsletter listed 18 changes made as a result of cooperation and hard work from staff and families at the preschool. Here are some of the accomplishments:

- developed parent and staff handbooks
- developed family resource booklet
- increased staff time for program planning
- trained staff in CPR and first aid
- updated personnel files
- added a locked cabinet built by parent for cleaning supplies
- added non-slip materials to step stools and outdoor play-yard ramp

Does Your Program Rate a 2 on Handwashing?

According to the new day care manual of the American Academy of Pediatrics, "Handwashing is the most effective way to prevent the spread of infections in day care. Studies show that when day care staff are trained to wash their hands after changing diapers and before preparing food, the risk of illness drops significantly."

"Throughout the accreditation process, everyone cooperated, and the teachers viewed the self-assessment process as a challenge. Since the staff and parents worked together for many months toward a common goal, the process improved their cohesiveness and raised morale."

—A director in Virginia

We Want to Know

Information is power. Please keep us informed about events related to accreditation that occur in your program, community, college, Affiliate Group, Resource and Referral agency, or wherever you work on behalf of young children. We want to use the *Update* to share the wealth of ideas and empower more people to achieve accreditation. If you have a complaint, a concern, or a compliment—please write or call the Academy staff. Without the information we need, we are powerless to take action to make improvements.

ccreditation Advertising

Some Do's and Don't's

ck of Yellow Page ads in a num-
mmunities and follow-up phone
Academy staff revealed a number
ams misrepresenting their ac-
on status. Ads included state-
ch as "_____ is na-
iccredited" or "_____
ied for NAEYC accreditation."
ie program was actually con-
its self-study but was not yet
ed. Some programs advertise
es as *accredited* when the more
description is that the teachers
entialed or *certified*. Some pro-
e accredited by local, state, re-
or national accrediting bodies
han NAEYC (such as the
l Association of Independent

To protect the integrity of the NAEYC accreditation system, only early childhood programs that have achieved NAEYC accreditation may advertise their NAEYC accredited status. Programs seeking accreditation must inform parents who will be involved in the self-study. However, no statement about possible future accreditation status should be made in formal advertising. Because it is impossible for the Academy to know about misleading or improper advertising for NAEYC accreditation throughout the country, we urge *Academy Update* readers to help us monitor such practices. We will inform programs of the principles of good practice in advertising accreditation status.

"

ood to be recognized for providing high
ty. It added a special touch of pride to
we do.

—A director of an accredited program in California

"

"

director opened all Parent
stionnaires to the second page so that
ould quickly spot check them.

—A validator in Washington, D.C.

"

Importance of Cultural Diversity

Respect for cultural diversity is an important component of a high quality early childhood program regardless of whether the children enrolled are ethnically different. We live in a heterogeneous society, and materials and activities in programs for young children should reflect this diversity. (See criteria **B-5a** and **B-7h.**)

To learn more about fostering respect for cultural diversity, read "Are You Sensitive to Interracial Children's Special Identity Needs?" by Frances Wardle in the January 1987 issue of *Young Children*. Wardle suggests ways early childhood educators can be sensitive to and supportive of the unique needs of interracial children and their families. Wardle states, "Young children are surprisingly aware of race. Adults should help them engage in positive interactions on the subject." Teachers should stress the richness and beauty of being different and the many ways, other than racially, that people are different. Talk too, about the many ways that people are the same. For more information on this topic, see NAEYC's *Understanding the Multicultural Experience in Early Childhood Education* by O. Saracho and B. Spodek (NAEYC #125 $5.50).

Save Your *Academy Update!*

Are you saving your copies of the *Academy Update?* We hope so. The *Update* can be filed easily in a three-ring binder. Back issues are not available, and distribution is limited to programs in self-study, validators, commissioners, and Affiliate Liaisons.

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no longer available

Accreditation May Help in Soliciting Foundations

A representative of a major foundation recently called the Academy for information on accreditation. She wanted to be informed in the event that an accredited program solicited the foundation for funding. She also stated that accreditation would be beneficial to early childhood programs soliciting grants.

Funding for Capital Improvements

The Kresge Foundation makes challenge grants in support of construction and renovation projects, major capital equipment purchase, and the purchase of real estate. Programs making construction improvements or purchasing equipment to achieve accreditation may want to consider submitting proposals for funding from this foundation. Request a copy of the Policies and Application Procedures by writing to

The Kresge Foundation
A.H. Taylor, Jr., President
P.O. Box 3151
3215 W. Big Beaver Road
Troy, MI 48007-3151

Parents-As-Partners

Many directors spend hours preparing programs for parent meetings or staff training. Now much of the work is done for you. Subscribe to NAEYC's Parents-As-Partners poster/brochure series and four times a year you will receive a colorful 24" x 36" poster and 50 copies of a companion brochure packed with useful tips and information. You won't want to miss any of the upcoming sets in the series. Topics will include math readiness, play, school-age children, and young children's fears. A year's worth of parent meetings planned with resources for just $30. Contact NAEYC to subscribe today!

ACADEMY

National Academy of Early Childhood Programs
A Division of the National Association for
the Education of Young Children
1834 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20009

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Please notify the Academy
of your new address!

ACADEMY Update

Early childhood professionals collaborating for quality

Volume 2 Number 1 Fall 1987

PS 023954

Academy Update

Early childhood professionals collaborating for quality

Academy Update is published by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, a division of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. The Academy administers the only professionally sponsored, national, voluntary accreditation system for preschools, child care centers, and school-age child care programs. The Academy's purpose is to improve and recognize the quality of care and education provided for young children in early childhood programs. *Academy Update* supports this goal by providing early childhood professionals, including directors, validators, and commissioners, involved in accreditation with current information and feedback on the system.

Articles in *Academy Update* may be reprinted without permission. You must cite the following information with the reprinted material: "Reprinted from *Academy Update* (volume number and issue), a publication of the National Association for the Education of Young Children."

The Academy welcomes your comments. Address them to

National Academy of Early Childhood Programs
1834 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20009
202-232-8777 800-424-2460

Quality = Risk Management

Risk management in early childhood programs has taken on new meaning as seemingly greater incidences of litigation occur and insurance rates soar. Because early childhood programs deal with children—the most precious possession people have—there is great potential for liability. Thus, to ensure protection of children and program staff, early childhood programs must provide a safe environment and practices, along with adequate liability coverage.

Managing risk and controlling loss in child care is a never-ending process. Directors and staff must continually assess and monitor the physical plant and staffing patterns to ensure safety.

Becoming accredited indicates a commitment to providing quality care. However, accidents happen in even the best programs. You are accustomed to looking at your program as an early childhood professional. Try looking at your program through the eyes of an attorney or insurance investigator. Here are some guidelines to help you keep children safe and sound:

- *Lock cabinets where dangerous supplies are stored.* A frequently unmet criterion is H-20 (chemicals are kept in locked cabinets inaccessible to children). Directors comment, "Children never go in that room," or "The shelf is too high for children to reach." However valid these assumptions are, they would probably not hold up in court if a child were to be poisoned or burned because she managed to get into an "inaccessible" cabinet. Don't take chances. Buy a lock and use it.
- *Playground safety.* Most accidents in child care centers happen on playgrounds. Staff must be alert and check equipment for defects on a regular basis. Many insurance companies have playground safety checklists. Ask your insurance agent for one. Staff must not view playground time as a recess or a break time for themselves. Teachers should walk around the playground observing children and anticipating potentially dangerous situations. Consider dividing large playgrounds into smaller zones with assigned teachers responsible for each section. Adults should not spend time in lengthy conversations with each other, but treat outside time as an extension of the classroom. Staff-child ratios should be maintained whether children are indoors or outdoors.
- *Head injuries.* Injuries to the head are particularly dangerous because the extent of the injury may not be obvious immediately. Symptoms may not show up for hours or even days in some cases. Therefore parents should be notified of every bump or bang on the head, no matter how trivial, so they can watch for problems that may develop later. *Keep a record of all accidents,* noting the date and time of the accident, how the accident occurred, and the remedies used, with a staff person's signature. Keep each accident log for at least 1 year.
- *Who's responsible?* Arrival and departure times often create confusion

"Risk Management" cont. on p. 2

"Risk Management" cont. from p. 1

about whether the center or the parent is responsible for the child. If a child is injured during a transition time, who's responsible? Encourage parents to sign children in or out immediately upon their arrival and departure. Clarify with parents that responsibility for their child is transferred to the center when a child is signed in and returns to the parent when the child is signed out.

- *Emergency training.* Would you know what to do in a medical emergency? Are you and your staff familiar with techniques to help a child who is choking, near drowning, or unconscious? A quality program fully meets criterion **H-10** (staff are trained in first aid and CPR). "How to Save Your Child's Life" is a 45-minute instructional videocassette that leads the viewer through the four critical stages in an infant or child respiratory emergency—choking, unconscious choking, mouth-to-mouth breathing, and CPR. Academy staff feel this is an excellent *refresher* tape for people who have had CPR training. For more information contact Ms. Elysa Markowitz, 4118 Wade Street, Los Angeles, California 90066.
- *Remain vigilant.* James Strickland, a nationally known expert on child care insurance, says that it isn't easy for insurance companies or programs to determine who's a good risk or a bad risk. Strickland states, "The most common error is thinking that if you have never filed a claim, you must be a good risk," but this is not necessarily true. You may become complacent about risk management because you know you provide a high quality program for children. But in high quality programs, staff remain vigilant to prevent and reduce accidents. Each and every day, staff must assess the environment to ensure it is ready to provide children with developmentally appropriate and *safe* learning experiences.

Loss Analysis of NAEYC-Insured Programs

MarketDyne International, Inc., provides liability insurance for centers to eligible NAEYC members. Recently, a loss analysis of 833 NAEYC member programs identified problem areas resulting in claims. A future issue of *Young Children* will provide an in-depth article on the findings of this study. Briefly, the analysis indicates that slips and/or falls are the leading cause of liability loss. These losses can be the result of many things: poor housekeeping; cluttered or congested play rooms, halls, or stairs; inadequate lighting; lack of procedures during inclement weather; improper purchasing or placement of furniture or play equipment; use of unsafe materials for playground surfaces; and the lack of adequate, trained staff to supervise inside activities and playground activities. The following are recommended corrective measures:

- Keep walkways and playrooms clear of toys and other tripping hazards.
- Maintain stairs in good repair with adequate lighting, non-slip surfaces, and secure handrails.
- Develop and implement inclement weather procedures such as clearing and/or salting snow covered parking lots and sidewalks, and preventing snow from being tracked into the building.
- Thoughtfully purchase, install, and maintain play equipment.
- Remove playground equipment installed over asphalt or concrete.
- Place shock-absorbing materials, such as shredded mulch or bark, sand, pea gravel, or shredded tires, under slides, swings, monkey bars, and other climbing equipment.
- Eliminate equipment associated with frequent injuries.

MarketDyne is a unique insurance carrier. This year, the company provided cash dividends to all insured programs based on a low percentage of claims. To find out more about MarketDyne and other insurance coverage offered to members, call the NAEYC Information Service at 202-232-8777 or 800-424-2460.

Assistance Available for Parents

Parents can request a free list of accredited programs by mail or they may call the Academy toll-free to receive the names of accredited programs in their area. Other interested individuals can obtain a list of accredited centers for $5.

NAEYC staff receive an average of 25 calls per week from parents looking for a high quality or accredited program. Parents who have their child in an accredited center often call when they are relocating.

CAEYC Offers Support for Accreditation

The Colorado AEYC provides grants to assist programs in paying the validation fees after the completion of the self-study. In addition, personnel will be available to answer questions and provide support during the accreditation process. For more information, contact Linda Sondale at 303-797-5678 or Dona Kelley 303-794-8544.

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Feedback on Accreditation

The Fall 1986 *Academy Update* asked for feedback on accreditation. Many of you responded by telling us how you promote accreditation to staff, parents, and the community; ways you celebrate achieving accreditation; and suggestions for improving the system. We appreciate these efforts and ask you to "keep those cards and letters comin' in!" The Academy is a dynamic organization, and we need your input. Here's what directors and validators are saying about accreditation:

Promote accreditation

Karen Stephens, director of Illinois State University Child Care Center in Normal, Illinois shared a wealth of ideas for promoting accreditation. For example, when the ISU Center was accredited, Karen sent a letter to friends of the center announcing their achievement. Karen requested they write a brief congratulatory letter via the "Letters to the Editor" section of the daily paper. "As leaders in our community and state, a letter from you would show that you support the goal of expanding the availability of affordable, quality child care programs for our children in need." Karen's other suggestions to promote accreditation include

- Order an engraved plaque with the date of accreditation and include a staff photo.
- Invite legislators and community and business leaders to have lunch at your program and see an accredited center firsthand!
- Have a big computer banner made saying "We're accredited!" Post it conspicuously.
- Answer your telephone "Accredited child care center, may I help you?"
- Inform your local Resource and Referral that your program is accredited.
- Sell children's T-shirts saying "I go to an accredited child care center!"
- Frame and proudly display the symbols of your accreditation provided by the Academy—the certificate and poster.

Celebrate accreditation

Achieving accreditation is a milestone. It involves a great deal of hard work by everyone. Some programs complete the self-study in a few months; others take 6 to 10 months. When staff learn their program is accredited, it's time for a celebration!

Here are some ways that centers around the country announce and celebrate their accreditation:

- John Bancroft, director of two accredited programs in Seattle, Washington (Sand Point Children's Center and Union Bay Children's Center), and his staff celebrated with a very special day. Before telling staff the good news, John quickly made official congratulatory certificates, complete with gold seals, for each teacher. The certificate read, "Greetings! By the authority vested in me by the children, parents, and staff of Union Bay and Sand Point Children's Centers and the National Association for the Education of Young Children, let it hereby be acclaimed that _____ was a staff member of the Neighbor House U.W. Childcare Program during the process of self-study and improvement of the Program and did in fact work diligently, above and beyond the call of duty, and that these efforts did lead to the accreditation of Sand Point and Union Bay Children's Centers by the Academy of the National Association for the Education of Young Children on June 18, 1987! Thank you and congratulations for your contribution to our continuing effort to provide quality childcare to our children!" Signed, John Bancroft, Program Director, June 19, 1987. He then called all 20 staff members and children to the playground, made the announcement, and presented the certificates.
- At First Presbyterian Children's Center in San Antonio, Texas, parents and church and board members responded positively when the center achieved accreditation. Parents and children had cake and punch at a Parent's Night to celebrate. An announcement in the church's newsletter resulted in individual members congratulating teachers all month long. Director Judy Morris said, "Even though most board members were initially opposed to our pursuing accreditation, the board wrote staff a wonderful letter of praise for our efforts *and* included a bonus!"
- Since receiving accreditation, Little Bear Child Development Center in Waukegan, Illinois worked with their board and made many improvements. The center opened a new room that allowed children to enroll in before- and afterschool programs. With the additional income, the board gave bonuses to the staff based on the number of years of employment, and increased salaries and personal days. The staff received a new, beautifully decorated lounge with a refrigerator and microwave oven. The board purchased a computer to make office work more efficient, and they agreed to send all staff to the NAEYC Annual Conference in Chicago in November 1987.
- The Children's Center at the University of Tennessee-Chattanooga received national recognition for its accomplishment from an article published in the alumni newsletter. In addition, the Commission recommendations helped the Center to gain the support and approval necessary to improve its playground.
- Many programs experience great success in gaining publicity for accreditation by using the Academy's sample press release. Other programs use alternative approaches such as the Learning Tree in Moline, Illinois, a for-profit program, that worked with the local Chamber of Commerce to get better media coverage.

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Director Assistance

What Happens after the Commission Meets?

After a Commission meets, the Academy notifies the center of the decision. If accredited, the center receives their original Program Description and a list of Commission recommendations for further improvements. Accredited programs also receive a certificate, poster, sample press release, logo sheet, and brochures for parents describing accreditation.

If accreditation is deferred, the program has several options. One misconception is that centers get only one chance. A decision to defer accreditation is accompanied by specific reasons and recommendations for improvement. The center can make the necessary improvements and request an additional on-site validation or the decision may be appealed. Grounds for appeal include but are not necessarily limited to

1. Program staff feel that the validated Program Description did not accurately reflect their program.
2. Program staff have made improvements since the validation visit or in response to the Commission Report.
3. Program staff have developed a plan of action that will result in the fulfillment of the Commission's recommendations.

Academy staff review the written appeal and determine how it is verified. Verification of the appeal may require an on-site visit or it may require community or institutional verification.

The important thing to remember is that the process doesn't end with deferral. By following the proper steps, your program has a good chance of being accredited. Most deferred programs pursue and achieve accreditation.

Don't Tear Up the *Guide*.

If you misplace or make an error in the Program Description in your self-study packet, don't tear the sample copy out of the *Guide to Accreditation* and send it to the Academy when you are ready for the validation visit. This makes handling by validators and commissioners very difficult. Call the Academy and order a new one. The cost is $5.

Give Yourself Credit for Training

In calculating the qualifications of your staff, remember to compute ECE/CD units for any staff person who may have her or his degree in a field *other* than Early Childhood Education or Child Development. An ECE/CD unit = 16 classroom hours or 1 semester hour of study related to Early Childhood Education or Child Development. ECE/CD units may be earned through college level courses, vocational courses, or other forms of in-service training.

Timelines

Self-study: how long should it take?

How much time should you spend on your self-study? Programs report completing the self-study in 4 to 6 months . . . you'll never be perfect! Set realistic goals and timelines for accomplishing tasks and work on them regularly. Changes are frequent in most early childhood programs, and rarely will a self-study be completed with all the same children, staff, and families. The accreditation process is designed to anticipate changes in your Program Description. Don't wait. Set a date now and go for it!

We need 6 weeks notice to set up a visit

The Academy's goal is to arrange a validation visit within 30 working days of receiving your Program Description. If you want to ensure a validation visit in the spring, the Academy *must* receive your Program Description 30 working days (or 6 weeks) prior to the date you'd like a visit. This is a very busy time for Academy staff because so many programs want visits before their program closes in May or June. In order to meet the diverse needs of programs and validators, staff must have adequate time to arrange visits. Avoid the spring rush—request your visit in the summer or fall.

When will you be notified of the accreditation decision?

Commissions meet every 8 to 10 weeks. For your program to be considered at a Commission meeting, your visit must occur at least 3½ weeks prior to the meeting. Most programs wait 1 to 2 months for their decision.

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Tips for Completing Your Program Description

After you complete the self-study and are ready to record the results in the Program Description, don't forget to

- Use the same names and number of groups on the Staffing Pattern and on the Classroom Observation Summary Sheet (page 7).
- Use the same initials or first names of staff members on the Staffing Pattern and Staff Qualifications (pages 7 and 10).
- Include the total number of staff to determine the qualifications for Criteria **D-1b** and **D-1c** (pages 49 to 50).

It's Not Cheating!

How does your program rate against the accreditation Criteria? Use the sample forms in the *Guide to Accreditation* to get an idea. If you are not satisfied with these ratings, make the necessary improvements.

Keep in mind that accreditation does not require 100% compliance with the Criteria. The purpose of the self-study is to help you analyze the strengths and weaknesses of your program.

Make the improvements and re-evaluate the program against the Criteria. The second set of ratings should be better than the first. You may want to distribute the Staff and Parent Questionnaires before and after improvements. If so, you may purchase additional copies of the questionnaires or make copies for that purpose. The Academy provides sufficient numbers of questionnaires for centers to distribute them only once.

When you are ready for your validation visit, record your program's best ratings on the Staff and Parent Questionnaire and Observation Summary Sheets and transfer them onto the Program Description.

Validation Visits

Tips for Directors

- If the validator hasn't called to arrange an arrival time at least 3 days prior to the visit, call the Academy. We will contact the validator.
- Don't plan special activities the day of the visit. Commissioners want information based on a normal day.
- Directors should plan to be available from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on the day of the visit. Directors who are also teachers should get a substitute to handle their classroom duties during the afternoon of the visit. They should teach as usual during the morning.
- Validators may not observe all classrooms, so prepare staff for the possibility that they may not be observed.
- Explain to staff that validators use the same Classroom Observation form to make observations that was used by the teachers during the self-study.
- To make the validation visit a positive experience for everyone involved it is a good idea to prepare the children, especially if the program does not have many visitors. Emphasize to staff that it should be a normal day. The presence of visitors may be distracting or disruptive for some children. A validator shared these suggestions:

  > Tell the children and parents ahead of time that visitors/observers will be coming to the center on a certain date, and briefly discuss the purpose of the visit. Introduce the visitors/observers to the children when they come into the classrooms.

- On the morning of the visit, you may need to make corrections or changes in the Program Description. If so, a note outlining any changes will be included with the letter confirming your visit.
- Use the List of Documents on pages 75 to 76 of the *Guide to Accreditation* and collect all the necessary documents in a central location. If possible, label each document with the applicable criterion to assist the validators.
- Validators do not make the accreditation decision. They should not subjectively discuss their positive feelings about your program. Explain to staff that positive feedback will come from the Commission decision—accreditation for your program!

> ***"The self-study was very worthwhile. It forced us to get several staff policies in writing, clean out our files, and sharpen up our records in general."***
>
> —A director in New York

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Parent Services Can Offer a Creative Edge

Have you been looking for ideas on additional services to offer parents of the children enrolled in your program? One idea is to educate parents about their tax options concerning payment for child care. Most parents are aware only of the tax credit, but there is an alternative.

Flexible benefit plans allow parents to pay for child care 100% tax-free. This usually increases the parents' spendable income by at least 1 week's worth of child care expenses each month. The program can be invaluable, especially to single parents who may have cash-flow problems. The employer implements the program that allows part of the employee's salary to be directed into a benefit account to pay for child care expenses. The employee does not pay Social Security or federal or state withholding taxes on these dollars.

National Flexible Benefit Plans (NFBP), Inc., a Colorado-based company, is building a network of providers interested in helping their clients become aware of this option. A local NFBP representative works closely with you and helps present this option to interested employers. NFBP also offers a simple and cost-effective system to implement and administer this program.

For more information, interested directors should write to National Flexible Benefit Plans, Inc., 5680 Greenwood Plaza Boulevard, Suite 300, Englewood, CO 80111, or call 303-850-9600. Liza Lidke, president of National Flexible Benefit Plans, is the author of "Your Guide to Child Care Savings" and the "Employer's Guide to Flexible Benefit Plans."

Do you have the new, expanded edition of NAEYC's *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children Birth Through Age Eight*? Order NAEYC #224. $5 prepaid.

Correction

In the Winter 1987 issue of *Academy Update*, we reported an inquiry from The Kresge Foundation concerning accreditation. We suggested that programs might apply to Kresge for construction and equipment projects that might help to achieve accreditation. The Foundation asked us to clarify that accreditation is not required before you apply, but that it is viewed as a positive characteristic when it *has already been achieved*. The Foundation also stated that its education grants go to institutions operating at the 4-year baccalaureate level and above. Elementary and secondary schools are ineligible. Child care programs are eligible when they are considered part of the Social Service category and when they tend to be larger programs, serving a diverse ethnic and economic population.

Keep in Touch with Parents

Children's Place in New Orleans distributed the Academy's Parent Questionnaire again several months after being accredited to let parents know that staff were not resting on their laurels. Parents appreciated that the center wanted to continue to meet their needs.

Accreditation Educates Parents

The Austin, Texas Communication Department produced a videotape for the Austin Child Care Commission to help parents choose quality child care programs. The video, "Recognizing Quality in Child Care: A Guide for Parents and Providers," used NAEYC's accreditation Criteria to describe the components of quality child care. The filming was done in accredited programs.

Multicultural Resource

Are you looking for good ideas to supplement or expand your multicultural activities? One new resource is *Alike and Different: Exploring Our Humanity with Young Children*, Bonnie Neugebauer (Editor), Exchange Press, Inc. Write to P.O. Box 2890, Redmond, WA 98073, or call 206-883-9394.

"Lots of things were brought to my attention during the self-study. I typed up the positive comments from Parent Questionnaires and gave them to my staff. We are very impressed with the process."

—A director of an accredited program in Michigan

Feedback for Validators

Tips for Validators

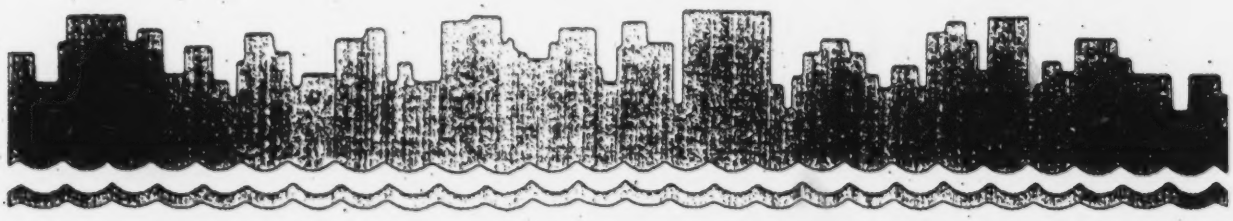
- If you are scheduled to do a validation visit in the winter, give the program director the telephone number where you will be staying. If school is canceled or delayed by a winter storm, you can be notified.
- When there are two validators, the director may want to invite a program coordinator, an assistant director, or a head teacher to sit in on the exit interview. The additional perspective is helpful.
- After a validation visit, do not communicate on the phone or in writing with the program. If you have any concerns or questions, about the center or the visit, contact the Academy staff immediately.
- Validators who are also center directors should not advertise their status as validators on your center's brochure. The public may misunderstand and think that your center is accredited. Only accredited programs should publicly advertise affiliation with the Academy.
- Validators often request feedback on their performance. In response, Academy staff recently developed a Validator Evaluation Form to be completed by directors following the visit. In the future, the Evaluation Form will be returned to the Academy with comments and then sent to the validator.

One Year Later

Watch for an article examining accredited programs 1 year after accreditation in the November 1987 issue of *Young Children*.

New Number?

New home or new job? Please notify us of your new phone number. We call to arrange validation visits during the day and we need your current work phone. Too often, we "lose" validators when they change jobs.



See You at the NAEYC Conference in Chicago November 12 to 15

Look for these sessions on accreditation.

Information meeting

A general information session about NAEYC's national, voluntary accreditation system—the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs—will be held on Friday, November 13 at 11:30 a.m. Directors are encouraged to attend to find out how their programs can become accredited and the benefits of accreditation for programs and the profession.

For validators

Share your experiences with other validators and Academy staff. Refresh your memory about validation procedures. Attend one of two special sessions for validators that will be held on Friday, November 13—either 1:00 to 2:30 p.m. or 3:00 to 4:30 p.m. These sessions are only for previously trained validators.

Sessions will be held at the Hyatt.

Happy Anniversary

At the end of our second year of Academy operation,

- more than 1,600 programs, from 46 states and the District of Columbia, are in the self-study process
- 1,600 validators are trained
- 375 programs representing 40 states and the District of Columbia are accredited

Alabama	1	Iowa	1	North Carolina	2	Tennessee	6
Alaska	2	Kansas	10	North Dakota	2	Texas	55
Arizona	7	Kentucky	3	Ohio	32	Vermont	1
Arkansas	1	Louisiana	18	Oklahoma	2	Virginia	20
California	36	Maryland	15	Oregon	5	Washington	15
Colorado	3	Massachusetts	7	Pennsylvania	8	West Virginia	1
Connecticut	12	Michigan	14	South Carolina	2	Wisconsin	2
District of Columbia	2	Minnesota	22			Wyoming	3
Florida	6	Montana	1				
Georgia	1	New Hampshire	2				
Hawaii	5	New Jersey	9				
Illinois	20	New Mexico	3				
Indiana	3	New York	15				

ACADEMY *Update*

National Academy of Early Childhood Programs
A Division of the National Association for the Education of Young Children
1834 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20009

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ACADEMY Update

Early childhood professionals collaborating for quality

Volume 2 Number 2 Winter 1988

Academy Update

Early childhood professionals collaborating for quality

Academy Update is published by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, a division of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. The Academy administers the only professionally sponsored, national, voluntary accreditation system for preschools, child care centers, and school-age child care programs. The Academy's purpose is to improve and recognize the quality of care and education provided for young children in early childhood programs. *Academy Update* supports this goal by providing early childhood professionals, including directors, validators, and commissioners, involved in accreditation with current information and feedback on the system.

Articles in *Academy Update* may be reprinted without permission. You must cite the following information with the reprinted material: "Reprinted from *Academy Update* (volume number and issue), a publication of the National Association for the Education of Young Children."

The Academy welcomes your comments. Address them to

National Academy of Early Childhood Programs
1834 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20009
202-232-8777 800-424-2460

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PBS Documentary Promotes Accreditation

Accreditation will soon receive nationwide attention! The Public Television Outreach Alliance will launch a national Child Care America Campaign in conjunction with NAEYC's Week of the Young Child, April 10 to 16, 1988. To begin the Campaign, PBS will air a prime time documentary, *Who Cares for the Children? The State of Child Care in America*, on Wednesday, April 13, 1988. This PBS special will focus public attention on the struggles of and solutions to providing quality early childhood programs. One segment will be a "day in the life" of Union Bay Day Care Center in Seattle—an NAEYC accredited program!

PBS also filmed (and we hope will show) a validation visit in process. Accolades to Pat Kennedy and her staff at the Eastfield Parent/Child Study Center in Dallas for agreeing to compound their anxiety and demonstrate quality child care before both validators *and* cameras.

Dallas will be showcased in the documentary as a community that has evolved solutions to help families care for their children. Child Care Partnership of Dallas, a nonprofit organization, has developed a unique model of assisting child care centers to upgrade quality. Among other services, the Partnership provides financial assistance and consultation to early childhood programs seeking accreditation.

Make this year's Week of the Young Child the best one ever! Plan activities to take advantage of the marvelous opportunity for increased visibility and support for accreditation. Develop strategies to get people to watch the PBS documentary on April 13. Post notices on bulletin boards, pass out fliers, or write an article for your newsletter. Sponsor a Parents' Night, watch the program together, and discuss it afterward. Plan a "We care for America's children" celebration for staff on April 16. Contact your local Affiliate Group for information on community events scheduled for the Week.

Order Week of the Young Child (WOYC) materials from NAEYC. These specially designed materials proclaim "We care for America's children" in the red, white, and blue colors of the Child Care America Campaign.

WOYC Balloons #650—Add a burst of color with these 9" round, red, white, and blue balloons. 50 balloons for $5

WOYC Posters #651—These 16" × 22" commemorative posters announce the PBS documentary. 5 posters for $5

"PBS Documentary" cont. on p. 2

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Helpful Hints for Accreditation Presentations

Planning to do a presentation on accreditation? Are you apprehensive about what to say and how to say it? Directors of accredited programs, validators, and commissioners are often asked to do presentations on accreditation. Here are some hints on ways to make your talk informative, interesting, and most of all accurate:

- Each accreditation experience is unique. Organize a panel to provide a variety of perspectives (several directors, or a director, validator, and commissioner).
- Provide current statistics on the number of accredited programs and the number involved in self-study. Call the Academy for an update.
- Request accreditation brochures from the Academy (3 to 4 weeks in advance) to distribute to participants.
- Be prepared for a diverse audience. Some people will be unfamiliar with accreditation; others will be involved in the process of self-study; and some directors may be ready to request a validation visit. If time permits, have participants introduce themselves so you can draw on their experiences.
- Take a display set of self-study materials. Briefly walk people through the self-study by explaining each form.
- Read (and refer directors contemplating accreditation to) two helpful articles: "NAEYC's Center Accreditation Project: What's It Like in Real Life?" by Margie Carter in *Child Care Information Exchange*, May 1986; and "Directors: How to Sell Accreditation to Staff, Board, and Parents" by Linda Buck in *Young Children*, January 1987.
- Show a 12-minute videotape, *National Academy of Early Childhood Programs: An Overview*, (½" VHS format) of Sue Bredekamp, Academy Director, answering the most frequently asked questions about the system. Reserve this videotape by calling Tanya DeNeal at NAEYC Headquarters—202-232-8777 or 800-424-2460. A limited number of tapes are available on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Show a 25-minute videotape, *Doing a Self-Study: Why and How?* (NAEYC #853), available for $39. This tape describes the benefits of self-study and provides help for directors and staff on how to conduct the self-study.
- Tell participants that a 26-minute videotape, *Using the Early Childhood Classroom Observation* (NAEYC #850), is available to orient directors and staff to the observation form used in the self-study. Order the videotape for $39 from NAEYC.
- Dispell the most common myth—that 100% compliance is required to achieve accreditation. Stress that Commission decisions are based upon *substantial compliance with the Criteria*. Encourage participants to read "How Early Childhood Programs Get Accredited: An Analysis of Accreditation Decisions" by Sue Bredekamp and Peggy Apple in *Young Children*, November 1986.
- Share your experience about accreditation, but caution that your experience is not necessarily representative. For example, many accredited programs receive media coverage, donations, or special acknowledgment for achieving accreditation. Benefits of accreditation vary because each program is unique. Do not raise false expectations that every accredited program will receive the same accolades. Remember *not* to discuss your program's compliance with the Criteria (what your program met or did not meet)—this is confidential information.
- Be prepared to answer a wide range of questions. People may ask about fees, how long the process takes, and how accreditation is maintained. Someone may want to know what happens when programs are deferred or how decisions are appealed. You'll find answers to these and other questions in back issues of the *Academy Update*, in *Accreditation Criteria and Procedures*, and in the *Guide to Accreditation*.
- Don't be afraid to say "I don't know." It is vital that you *not* give inaccurate information. Tell participants to call the Academy for answers to specific questions about their program or for interpretation of the Criteria.

"PBS Documentary" cont. from p. 1

WOYC Fliers #652—One side is a mini version of the WOYC Poster; flip it over for important statistics on the need for high quality programs. 50 fliers for $5

WOYC Buttons #653—A bright, oval button. 50 buttons for $15

WOYC Logo Sheet #654 — Camera-ready artwork of the Week of the Young Child motif in various sizes for jazzing up your fliers and newsletters. 1 sheet for $1. **Logo Sheet (#656)** has one large motif. 1 sheet for $1

Save! Order the **WOYC Starter Kit #655**—Each Kit contains 50 balloons, 5 posters, 50 fliers, 50 buttons, and 1 small-logo sheet. $30

The Week of the Young Child, the Child Care America Campaign, and the documentary will increase public awareness of the most critical child care issues—quality for children, affordability for parents, and adequate compensation for staff. The accreditation system is highlighted as one solution for improving the quality of child care. Directors of accredited programs and validators will want to take advantage of the increased public attention that will result from these efforts and will also want to be prepared to answer questions about accreditation.

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Developmentally Appropriate Practice

Many of the accreditation Criteria refer to "developmentally appropriate activities . . . materials . . . or expectations." These criteria are sometimes interpreted differently by early childhood professionals and are sometimes misinterpreted by individuals who lack training in early childhood development/child development.

No concept is more key to defining quality than "developmental appropriateness." To provide a clear definition of this important concept, NAEYC published *Developmentally Appropriate Practice* (DAP) in November 1986. The first edition of the book included a broad statement describing developmentally appropriate practice across the full age span of early childhood—birth through age 8—and more detailed descriptions of appropriate and inappropriate practices for infants and toddlers and for 4- and 5-year-olds. In 1 year, more than 35,000 copies of DAP were distributed.

An expanded edition of DAP is now available. The expanded edition contains all the material from the first book *plus* new chapters on appropriate practices for 3-year-olds and for children in primary grades; successful transitions; and strategies to inform others about developmentally appropriate practice. These statements include descriptions of inappropriate as well as appropriate practices because people often learn what to do by learning what *not* to do.

Directors, teachers, and parents involved in programs seeking accreditation need to understand what is developmentally appropriate for young children. To obtain a copy of the expanded edition of DAP (NAEYC #224), send a check for $5 to NAEYC. A brochure, "Good Teaching Practices for 4- and 5-Year-Olds" (NAEYC #522) is also available. Individual copies of the brochure are available for 50¢ each from NAEYC, or you may order 100 copies for $10.

A new videotape, *Developmentally Appropriate Practice: Birth Through Age 5*, depicts teachers and children in action in developmentally appropriate programs. The tape also points out inappropriate practices. Valuable for teachers, directors, trainers, and parents, the 27-minute videotape is available from NAEYC for $39. Order NAEYC #854 (½" VHS format).

Preparing an Annual Report

Accredited programs are required to submit Annual Reports. The Academy mails the Annual Report to accredited programs approximately 2 months prior to the anniversary date of accreditation. The center uses this eight-page form to report any improvements or changes in the program since achieving accreditation. The Report is due on the anniversary date.

"*I believe one of the most positive results of our self-study process was the growth in the staff's morale and self-esteem. Our parents are proud to be connected with an accredited school.*"

—A director of an accredited program in Illinois

A Return on Your Investment

Forrest T. Jones & Co., insurance representative for NAEYC, reports new developments in coverage for accredited centers. The premium for the Student Accident Policy rate is reduced by 6% for accredited centers. The new per child rate with no deductible is $4.25, but $4.00 for accredited programs. In addition to the decrease in premiums, accredited programs enjoy two and one-half times the benefits. If the loss ratio is excellent, there may be room to negotiate greater savings in premiums for accredited centers in the future.

Accreditation Reduces Insurance

The Early Learning Center in Champaign, Illinois reports that after being accredited, the Cincinnati Insurance Company reduced their liability insurance $250 a year—a 5% reduction.

Attention: Academy Liaisons

To promote accreditation and provide current information on accreditation efforts, the Academy requests that every Affiliate Group designate one member to serve as an Academy Liaison. While job responsibilities for the Liaison are determined by the needs of each Affiliate, following are examples of ways Liaisons can support accreditation and keep others posted on accreditation activities.

- Write (or reprint) articles about accreditation for your Affiliate newsletter. Use the *Academy Update* as one resource, or *The Affiliate*, that is distributed to all Affiliate officers.
- Ask your conference program committee to schedule a session on accreditation. (See "Helpful Hints for Accreditation Presentations" on p. 2.)
- Promote accredited programs in your area. When programs are accredited, send press releases to daily, weekly, and neighborhood newspapers; radio and television stations; newsletters of churches, community centers, and civic organizations; local magazines; and in-house publications of local corporations.
- Have a special event honoring accredited programs. Capitalize on this year's Week of the Young Child/ Child Care America Campaign, and plan something extra special! (See "PBS Documentary Promotes Accreditation" on p. 1.)
- Keep a supply of accreditation brochures on hand and distribute to legislators, community council or school board members, or at any meeting where the well-being of young children is on the agenda.
- The *Academy Update* is the primary vehicle for communicating with Liaisons about accreditation activities. Save your copies of the *Update* (perhaps in a three-ring binder) to pass on to your successor.
- Let us know about your efforts to promote accreditation. Are accreditation workshops well attended? Are directors in your community enthusiastic about the accreditation process? Please send us copies of any newspaper or magazine articles on accreditation so that we can stay informed.

Affiliate Groups and the Academy share the common goal of working to improve the quality of programs available for young children. Academy Liaisons play a pivotal role in achieving this goal by providing information about accreditation efforts to both groups.

The Academy is only a phone call away . . . . Validators: please contact Academy staff with any questions or concerns you may have before, during, or after the validation visit. And, make sure you notify us if your address or phone numbers change.

Tips for Validators

- Before or during a visit, call the Academy if you have any questions about the validation procedures. Do not ask another validator.
- Begin the visit by discussing the daily schedule with the director. Before observing in classrooms, determine when it is best to observe groups. Find out when the children are eating, sleeping, and involved in other activities.
- Sometimes school-age groups are difficult to observe because the children move around among activities. Observe the children according to the groupings recorded on the Staffing Pattern. Use the same groupings the center used whether by activity, age, or teacher.
- When reviewing curriculum plans, personnel policies, or other administrative documents, the validator's role is to verify that the document exists and meets the criterion—not to evaluate the content of the document.
- When you are assigned to do a validation visit with another person, schedule a time to meet before the visit to discuss the activities and organize the tasks. Teamwork is very important during the visit and speeds up the process on-site.

"*It is exciting to see the significant success that the self-study has in improving the quality of programs.*"

—A validator in New York

Frequently Asked Questions

Who are validators and what do they do?

Validators are early childhood professionals trained by the Academy. Their role is to make on-site visits to verify the accuracy of the Program Description. Validators assist in the collection of information needed by the commissioners to make accreditation decisions. They do not decide if a program is accredited and they are not to serve as consultants during a visit. Validators are volunteers. The Academy pays just the expenses of validators and commissioners.

* * *

How are classrooms selected for observation during a validation visit?

The daily enrollment of children determines the number of validators assigned for the validation visit. In small centers, validators may be able to observe all classrooms. But in larger centers, validators verify the information in the Program Description by observing a random sample of classrooms. On the morning of the visit, the validator chooses the classrooms to observe, attempting to see all the different age groups served.

The entire validation process is based on sampling. Any 1- or 2-day visit to a program is only a 1- or 2-day sample of what goes on there all the time. If the ratings obtained for the sample observed match the ratings reported by the center, we can assume that what is not observed would also match. Sampling is a well known and respected method for gathering information. By relying on sampling, the Academy is able to minimize costs for centers.

Community College Grants Support Accreditation Training

The Corporate Child Development Fund in Austin, Texas, with funds from the Meadows Foundation, funded three community colleges in Texas to develop courses and provide technical assistance on accreditation. Validators and directors of accredited programs served as training consultants. The colleges were extremely creative in developing their training models:

- Del Mar Community College in Corpus Christi provided training through a 3-semester-hour college credit course to eligible people. The course, Program Management, reviewed the accreditation process and provided on-site consultation to centers serving low-income families. The grant monies paid for tuition fees, books, and supplies. The course was so popular that the college added a second section to accommodate all interested enrollees. In addition, 14 people who did not receive scholarships also enrolled in the course.
- Austin Community College provided 10 hours of on-site consultation on accreditation to eight centers serving low-income families. The college used peer trainers who are directors of accredited centers. The grant also paid tuition for some of the staff from the eight centers to attend college credit courses in child development to increase their educational qualifications.
- San Antonio College provided training through a specially designed 35-clock-hour continuing education course on the accreditation process for 15 staff members from six centers serving low-income families. The course included 5 hours of on-site consultation to each program.

The Fund is currently working with El Paso Community College on developing a course for 13 centers.

For information on the Corporate Child Development Fund for Texas, write Nancy Beaver, Executive Director, 4029 Capital of Texas Highway South, Suite 102, Austin, TX 78704-7920.

Does a criterion have to be met if it is not required by licensing?

When a criterion is not met, the director reports a rating of 1 or 2, and adds a comment. The comment should explain what the program is not doing and why. Sometimes directors explain that a criterion is not met because it is not required by licensing. This explanation should be used sparingly. Commissioners evaluate the program against the accreditation Criteria which are higher quality standards than most licensing standards.

Legislation Supports Accreditation

Several state legislatures have proposed legislation that would provide incentives for early childhood programs to achieve accreditation. Proposals range from encouraging state boards of education and health departments to inform programs about accreditation, to increasing subsidies to publicly funded programs that achieve accreditation. The Academy will be following these proposals and will use the *Academy Update* to keep you informed about developments. If you know of other such developments, please inform the Academy staff.

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Director Assistance

Ideas for Completing the Self-Study

Jill Phillips, Assistant Director of Toledo Day Nursery in Toledo, Ohio, shared these tips on how to approach the self-study process:

- Introduce the staff to the concept of accreditation before getting involved.
- Distribute copies of the Criteria, classroom observations, and Staff and Parent Questionnaires at a staff meeting.
- Hold individual meetings with teachers and/or teaching teams to dispel any anxiety or fears prior to classroom observations.
- Loan the videotape, *Using the Early Childhood Classroom Observation* (NAEYC # 850), to individual staff members. (Available for $39 from NAEYC.)
- Set up team meetings after the completion of the observations to discuss the results.
- Hold a Parents' Day to answer questions, and have parents complete the questionnaires in the early morning and late afternoon. Serve coffee and donuts.
- Hold special staff meetings after the entire process to discuss the results.

Distribution of List of Accredited Programs—A Clarification

In the Fall 1987 issue of the *Academy Update*, we stated that parents may obtain a free list of accredited programs and other interested individuals may purchase the list for $5. Since there have been many requests for the list, we wish to clarify that the Academy distributes the list for noncommercial use only.

Parents may obtain a free list of centers in their state or a state where they are seeking an early childhood program. Other interested individuals who wish to purchase the list must submit the request in writing and include the purpose for which the list is intended.

"*The self-study was a very positive process and provided an opportunity for growth. Our parents were supportive and as excited as the staff. We spent 1 year in the process and I wouldn't have wanted to do it more quickly, even though, we did not have to make major changes.*"

—A director of an accredited program in California

Changes in Accredited Programs

When there is a change of director, inform the Academy office of the new director's name as soon as possible. Notify us within 6 months if the center moves to a new location or changes ownership. Revalidation is required for a change in location or ownership, but not for a change of director.

When You Order

Ordering resources from NAEYC can be done in two ways. If your order is more than $20, you may write or call NAEYC and be billed for the total amount (plus shipping charges). If your order is less than $20, you must prepay the amount (but there are no shipping charges).

Make your checks payable (in U.S. funds) to NAEYC. NAEYC does not accept credit cards. To obtain discounts on quantity orders, refer to your latest copy of the resources catalog, or call NAEYC at 202-232-8777 or 800-424-2460.

A "Novel" Birthday Idea

Looking for a new idea for celebrating birthdays at your center? Here's one you might like. Consider asking parents to donate a children's book to the center in their child's honor. Give parents a list of appropriate books and suggest they take their child with them to the bookstore to pick one out. When the child delivers their "gift," write the child's name and birth date on the inside cover. Each time the book is read to a group, not only is the child acknowledged for having a birthday, but his generous contribution to the program is also remembered.

This "novel" idea can replace sugar-filled birthday cakes, add quality books to your library, and help children feel good about giving!

Need Additional Self-Study Materials?

If you are involved in the self-study process, you may obtain additional materials. Below is the price list for the individual materials. Make your check payable to NAEYC and include your Program Code with your order. To ensure speedy processing, send your order to the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, 1834 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20009.

Price List for Additional Self-Study Materials

Accreditation Criteria & Procedures	$6
Guide to Accreditation	$37
Early Childhood Classroom Observation	$3
Classroom Observation Summary Sheet	$1
Administrator Report	$3
Staff Questionnaire	$2
Staff Questionnaire Summary Sheet	$1
Parent Questionnaire	$.15
Parent Questionnaire Summary Sheet	$1
Program Description	$5

Questions about the Validation Visit

If you have concerns about the validation visit or the validator does not follow the proper procedures, contact the Academy office. Call or write immediately after the visit.

Having Problems Interpreting the Criteria?

If you have questions about how to interpret the Criteria, call the Academy office. Only the Academy staff is authorized to officially interpret the Criteria.

Is There a Box in Your Corner?

Self-Study Questionnaire
Return to the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs
1834 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20009

Did your center purchase the self-study materials only to have the box gather dust or serve as a footstool? If you haven't been able to get started or are feeling stuck in the process, the Academy would like to know what help you need from us to complete the self-study. Use the form below or write to us.

1. **How long have you had the self-study materials?**
   - ☐ 1–5 months ☐ 6–11 months ☐ 12–17 months
   - ☐ 18 months–2 years ☐ more than 2 years

2. **How far have you gotten in the self-study process?**
   - ☐ box is unopened
   - ☐ box is opened and materials glanced at
   - ☐ director reviewed materials
   - ☐ partially completed (check all that apply)
     - ☐ classroom observations
     - ☐ Administrator Report
     - ☐ Staff Questionnaire
     - ☐ Parent Questionnaire
   - ☐ completed self-study but haven't filled out Program Description to send to Academy

3. **What obstacles are holding up your progress?** (check all that apply)
   - ☐ not enough time
   - ☐ not enough money for validation fee
   - ☐ too much change in program (for example, staff turnover)
   - ☐ don't understand how to organize tasks
   - ☐ don't meet Criteria (although 100% compliance with Criteria is not necessary)
   - ☐ can't motivate staff and/or parents to become involved
   - ☐ missing self-study materials
   - ☐ lack of resources to make needed improvements
   - ☐ completing self-study was our goal (not interested in accreditation)
   - ☐ other (explain) _____

4. **What can the Academy do to help you overcome these obstacles?**

Promoting Accreditation

The first two accredited centers in South Carolina—Richland Two Child Development Center and Burroughs Child Development Center—received special recognition. The South Carolina State Health and Human Services Finance Commission planned a special event to announce their achievement. National, state, and local child development leaders attended this successful event. Four television stations covered the day's activities.

Edina Kids Club in Edina, Minnesota, received a commendation from the Board of Education for earning accreditation. Edina Kids Club was the first school-age program in the state to be accredited.

Karen Stephens, director of the Illinois State University Child Care Center in Normal, Illinois, wrote an excellent article entitled, "Promote Your National Center Accreditation!" for *Child Care Information Exchange*, November 1987.

Innovative Arizona Project Improves Mainstreamed Programs

An innovative 1-year pilot project in Arizona is using the Academy's self-study to standardize quality in 27 early childhood programs serving handicapped and nonhandicapped children. Several state and private agencies are collaborating to improve programs by (1) funding application fees for self-study materials, (2) providing technical assistance to programs through on-site visits and telephone calls by early childhood consultants, and (3) conducting four, all-day meetings on approaches to completing the self-study process.

The State Department of Education, the Division of Developmental Disabilities, the Department of Health Services, and the Southwest Human Development/Resource Access Project selected diverse programs statewide to participate in the Self-Study Project. Participants include a migrant Head Start program, public school preschool, and for-profit and nonprofit, half- and full-day programs that integrate special needs children. Although financial support is limited to self-study fees, many programs indicate they intend to pursue accreditation. For further information about the Arizona Self-Study Project, call Ellen Orton Montanari at 602-438-2278, or JoAnn Woodley at 602-255-3183.

Advertising Accreditation Status

A program in the self-study process should not advertise formally that it is a "candidate for accreditation." When the system first began operating, some programs were told that such advertisement was acceptable. However, the Academy has received inquiries and even complaints from parents about programs that are "in process." To prevent public confusion, only accredited programs may advertise their affiliation with the Academy and NAEYC.

Centers whose directors or staff are members of NAEYC should not advertise that the center is a "member of NAEYC." NAEYC has *no* institutional membership. Only individuals may join NAEYC.

ACADEMY *Update*

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ACADEMY Update

Early childhood professionals collaborating for quality

Volume 2 Number 3 Spring-Summer 1988

Academy Update

Early childhood professionals collaborating for quality

Academy Update is published by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, a division of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. The Academy administers the only professionally sponsored, national, voluntary accreditation system for preschools, child care centers, and school-age child care programs. The Academy's purpose is to improve and recognize the quality of care and education provided for young children in early childhood programs. *Academy Update* supports this goal by providing early childhood professionals, including directors, validators, and commissioners, involved in accreditation with current information and feedback on the system.

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The Academy welcomes your comments. Address them to

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naeyc

Why Accreditation?

"We have too much to do and not enough money to do it. Why should our program get accredited?"

"Our program is already licensed so why should we get accredited?"

"As a parent, why should I look for an accredited center for my child?"

Questions like these are often asked of the Academy staff and of directors who have chosen to pursue accreditation. NAEYC's accreditation system is voluntary, and each program director, owner, or board must decide whether accreditation is right for that particular program. Here are some of the benefits that national accreditation offers the early childhood profession, parents, children, and our society.

- The Academy's Criteria for High Quality Early Childhood Programs provide a set of goal standards toward which all early childhood programs throughout the country can strive. They provide inspiration for the field.
- The Academy's Criteria are the only set of national standards that apply to all types of early childhood centers and schools, helping to undo the common myth that child care and education are two different systems.
- The accreditation process examines the total program, but emphasizes the quality of interactions among staff and children and the developmental appropriateness of the curriculum,—what really happens to children! The Academy also addresses the other dimensions of the program such as staffing, staff qualifications, physical environment, and administration, which are all *predictors* of quality. We consider those factors along with what is observed in classrooms, and we weigh most heavily the child's experiences.
- Accreditation and licensing are compatible systems. Licensing establishes a baseline of protection for children. Because licensure is mandatory for legal operation, licensing stresses objective standards that are easily measured. Accreditation standards and procedures are both objective and subjective in recognition of the fact that evaluating the quality of an early childhood program requires professional judgment. Validators and commissioners are qualified early childhood professionals, unlike most licensing monitors.
- Accreditation improves the quality of group programs for children and families. The self-study process involves teachers, directors, and parents in looking at the program and setting their own goals for improvement. All programs that have completed the self-study have made some improvements, and some programs have improved enormously.
- Accreditation establishes a national standard that can be used to educate parents. In the future when many programs are accredited, the system will assist parents in their search for

"Why Accreditation" cont. on p. 2

"Why Accreditation" cont. from p. 1

high quality programs. Already, NAEYC receives numerous calls each day from parents looking for an accredited program (most often from parents who are relocating and have had their child enrolled in an accredited center).

- Accreditation provides a valuable professional development experience for directors and staff members. We hear frequently from directors who report that the professionalism of their staff has improved along with staff morale and pride.
- Accreditation provides a system for funders and contributors to early childhood programs to be assured of a sound investment. Accreditation is a valuable assurance for corporations offering employer-sponsored child care services, especially among national companies.
- Accreditation provides a new network for high quality early childhood programs. Many excellent programs choose to be accredited not because they have something to prove but because they want to support the Association's efforts to upgrade the image and status of the early childhood profession.

Timeline for Commission Meetings

Commission meetings are held every 8 to 10 weeks. To be considered at a given meeting, a program must have had its validation visit at least 3 weeks prior to the meeting date so that validated Program Descriptions may be reviewed by Academy staff and mailed to commissioners in advance. Following a Commission meeting, programs are notified in writing of the decision. Commission meetings are scheduled in 1988 on May 4 & 5, June 15 & 16, August 3 & 4, and in early October and early December. We strongly encourage programs to request their validation visits in the summer, fall, or winter to avoid the spring rush.

Sometimes the magic works . . .

Dear Ralph Roe, Validator,

I want you to know that you did an excellent job during our validation visit. The staff and myself were put at ease by your warm, comforting smile. It is truly a wonderful skill to be able to blend into the environment—you have that skill.

It was especially enjoyable for me to see your delight in the children's interactions. Seldom do I really take the time to sit back to just enjoy the children.

The entire accreditation process was a positive experience for both myself and my staff. I can tell that this is only a beginning for us and we will continue to work towards a better program. Thank you for your part in the process.

Sincerely,
Carol Fuller, Director

Dear Academy,

This process works! I have recently visited 17 early childhood programs in my new work area. My staff and I have observed a qualitative difference in the environment, program, and staff morale in accredited programs. We've seen the difference the Academy makes!

Ralph Roe, Validator

And sometimes it doesn't . . .

Dear Academy,

We would like you to be aware of the following concerns about our validation visit. The validator redefined the Criteria. The validator made frequent comparisons of our center to her classrooms. The validator frequently took the role of an advisor. According to the time frame stated in the *Guide to Accreditation* (p. 205), the validator did not spend adequate time in classroom observation. The validator was late and did not observe the arrival of the children.

We believe the accreditation system is a valuable one. We appreciate your consideration of our concerns.

Sincerely,
Program Director

Note: This program received another visit at the Academy's expense, as do all programs whose validators do not follow proper procedures. Fortunately, such complaints are rare, but if your program has a negative experience with accreditation, please do not hesitate to contact the Academy office.

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Then There Were the Lambs

by Martha O'Dell
Director, Friend's Day Care Center
West Milton, Ohio

Mary had a little lamb,
Its fleece was white as snow,
And everywhere that Mary went
The lamb was sure to go.
It followed her to school one day,
Which was against the rule.
It made the children laugh and play,
To see the lamb in school.

As the director of a child care center for 110 children, I hear nursery rhymes frequently. But, I learned the real reason why Mary's lamb was not allowed in school the day our program was validated for national accreditation, a day we had worked toward for more than 6 months.

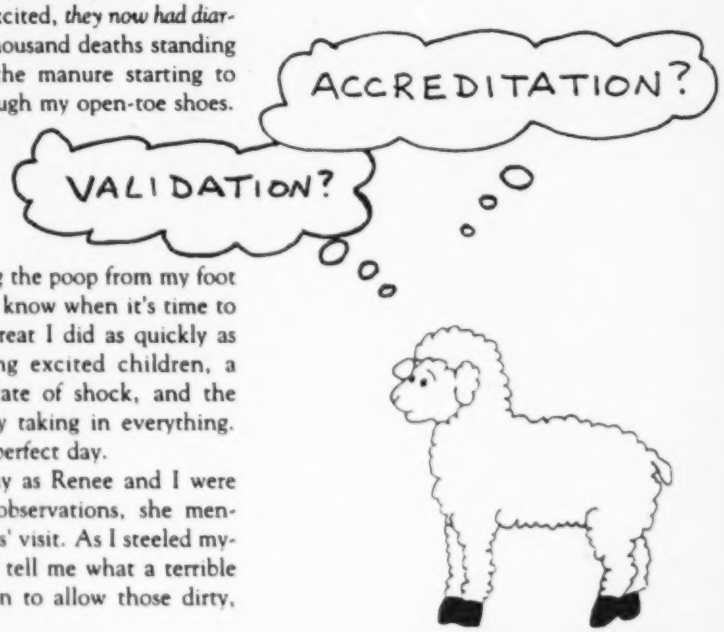
After the validator, Renee, arrived and met with me, she settled in for her first observation in the 2-year-olds' room. She was to observe the happenings of that group of children and their teacher, looking for the quality of interactions, the appropriateness of learning experiences, and the teacher's ability to cope with the "normal" actions and reactions of 2-year-old children. After 5 years in my position, I should have known the word *normal* is not in our vocabulary.

After taking Renee to the 2-year-olds' room, and giving the teacher a sympathetic yet encouraging look, I hurried to the kitchenette for a badly needed cup of coffee. On my way back to the office, I heard a loud commotion in the 5-year-olds' room. Warning bells were ringing in my head, and my silent prayer was "Please, not today, nothing bad today." I arrived at the room to see two baby lambs swallowed up by the clamoring crowd of children. How nice. This was the day, of all days, that Stacy decided to bring her lambs to show the class. I might have been able to keep a smile on my face, had I not looked down the hall and seen a trail of lamb manure from the front doors to the classroom. Stacy's mom, Mary Jo, followed my gaze, gasped, and ran to the bathroom for paper towels. This was a no-win situation. I could break Stacy's heart and not allow the lambs to go any further, or, I could take a risk and allow her to take them to all the rooms, including the room in which Renee sat observing. I decided to take the risk.

I poked my head in the door of the 2-year-olds' room where the teacher, Tamela, flashed me a look of sheer terror. The 2-year-olds erupted in shouts of joy as the lambs pushed their way into the room. The children didn't hesitate to hug and pet the lambs. As I stood there focusing on the animals, afraid to make eye contact with Renee, I felt something gooey hit my foot. These lambs were so excited, *they now had diarrhea.* I died a thousand deaths standing there, feeling the manure starting to ooze down through my open-toe shoes. As I stood there silently screaming, I felt Mary Jo, quietly and quickly cleaning the poop from my foot and the floor. I know when it's time to retreat, and retreat I did as quickly as possible, leaving excited children, a teacher in a state of shock, and the validator quietly taking in everything. So much for a perfect day.

Later that day as Renee and I were discussing her observations, she mentioned the lambs' visit. As I steeled myself to hear her tell me what a terrible idea it had been to allow those dirty, manure-dropping lambs in the center, she started laughing. It reminded her, she said, of a similar experience she had as a director involving a goat, a boa constrictor, and some brand new carpeting. Because Tamela had handled the entire interruption so professionally, helping the children wash their hands after the lambs left and telling them why they were using soap, and because I had chosen to be flexible and allow the children the experience of seeing and petting the lambs, knowing it was a disruption on an important day, Renee was assured that we were more interested in the experiences of the children than the impression we were making on an observer.

We did achieve accreditation. The lambs can't take all the credit, but they did help. The day of our validation visit and the story of Stacy's lambs will be remembered for many years.



Who Gets Accredited?

Any group program serving a minimum of 10 children from birth through age 5 or school-age children in before- and/or afterschool care is eligible to be accredited by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs. Since NAEYC began developing the accreditation system, people have made assumptions about it. We have heard statements such as, "That's only for lab schools," or "Half-day programs are the only ones who can get accredited," or "That's only for funded child care centers." All of these statements and many others like them are untrue. The reality is that NAEYC's system is the only national, voluntary accreditation system that accommodates the diversity of the field of early childhood education. Accredited programs include full- and half-day, church-housed, and church-sponsored centers; Head Start programs; private, for-profit child care centers and preschools; nonprofit, community-funded child care centers; employer-sponsored centers; parent cooperative preschools; public school prekindergartens, kindergartens, and school-age child care programs.

Because the accreditation system is so new, there may only be a handful of accredited programs in a city or state. If the first accredited programs in an area are a certain type, such as church-related preschools, the community may assume that the accreditation is only for that type of program. But the Academy is for ALL early childhood programs. Its diversity is best seen from a national perspective rather than a local one.

College Courses on Accreditation

Many 4-year and 2-year colleges are now offering courses on administration of early childhood programs. Eula Miller, chairperson of the Education Program at the Alexandria campus of Northern Virginia Community College, and Pearl Waxman, director of the accredited World Bank Children's Center in Washington, D.C., restructured the course, "Child Development Program Planning and Management," around the accreditation process. The text for the course is *Accreditation Criteria and Procedures*. Course content includes using the Early Childhood Classroom Observation that is part of the accreditation system and systematically comparing accreditation criteria and Virginia licensing standards. The goal of the course is for each student to formulate a personal definition of a quality program for preschool children.

If you know of a similar course in your area or institution, please send a copy of the syllabus or the name of the contact person to Academy Headquarters so we can share this information with others.

Oregon Foundation Supports Accreditation

In an effort to promote improved early childhood education and child care in Oregon, the Oregon Community Foundation is seeking grant proposals from early childhood programs interested in gaining national accreditation. Eligibility is limited to programs with 501 (c)(3) tax status. The next grant cycle deadline is September 1, 1988. Interested directors in Oregon may contact Kathleen Cornett, Program Officer, The Oregon Community Foundation, 1110 Yeon Building, 522 S.W. Fifth Avenue, Portland, OR 97204. 503-227-6846.

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Early childhood professionals collaborating for quality

Volume 3 Number 1 Fall 1988

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Academy Launches Media Campaign

In July 1988, NAEYC's Academy initiated a major media campaign to promote public awareness and recognition of early childhood program accreditation. A press kit was mailed to major newspapers, magazines, and broadcast media suggesting that they choose early childhood program accreditation as a theme for their "Back-to-School" features. The press kit included: a press release; additional information about accreditation including a description of the criteria; a new NAEYC brochure promoting accreditation to parents and the general public; and a list of the accredited programs in their area.

Back-to-School is a natural time period when parents start thinking about making choices for their children. Back-to-School issues are perennial features for which reporters often seek a new angle. The current national interest in child care coupled with the attention on program quality makes accreditation a timely topic.

The accreditation system has been in full operation for more than 2 years and more than 650 programs are accredited from 45 states. Although a small percentage of the total number of programs in the country, this number is significant enough for us to begin national promotion of NAEYC accreditation. In our communications, we are careful not to imply that all non-accredited programs are not high quality. The accreditation system is so new that many good programs may not know about it. But we do think that large-scale promotion of accreditation and high quality programs will encourage good programs to seek accreditation.

As we go to press, it is too soon to determine the outcome of the media campaign. But we are very optimistic about the future of accreditation and the impact that this system will continue to have on improving the field of early childhood education.

Media Pays Attention

Recently, the issues of child care and accreditation have been gaining more media coverage. In addition to magazines and newspapers publishing articles on these topics, accredited centers have been successful in promoting accreditation on radio talk shows and television. Here are some examples:

The July issue of *Changing Times* magazine included an article, "How to Size Up Day Care." The article emphasized that parents do not have to trade quality for convenience and referred to the accreditation criteria. Featured as examples of affordable, quality programs were 3 accredited centers — University Baptist Preschool in Seattle, Washington; Ohio University Child Development Center in Athens, Ohio; and Hyde Park Baptist Child Development Center in Austin, Texas. A checklist was included to aid parents in observing and selecting an appropriate child care center. Associated Press picked up the *Changing Times* article, widely expanding its dissemination.

During Week of the Young Child, "Accredited Centers Are In High Demand," appeared in the *American-Statesman* newspaper, Austin, Texas. Spotlighted were Austin's 8 accredited centers: First Baptist Church Day School,

See Media, p. 2

Media. cont. from p. 1

First Presbyterian Church Day School, First United Methodist Preschool, Hyde Park Baptist Child Development, Open Door Preschool, Open Door South, Westlake Hills Presbyterian Preschool, and Westlake Methodist Preschool. The article pointed out that although these centers have long waiting lists, they still elected to participate in the accreditation process. All of the directors interviewed said they thought accreditation was worth the expense and effort involved. Barbara Anderson, director of First Presbyterian Church Day School, summarized, "It was a way to measure our school against a set of criteria and see how we measured up against standards that were more than just the minimum required by the state."

Karen Martin, director of the Memorial Methodist Early Childhood Center and co-president of the Westchester AEYC in New York, used a Letter to the Editor in the local newspaper to announce her program's accreditation. She wanted to spur the interest of other programs to pursue accreditation and probably succeeded because Letters to the Editor are one of the most widely read parts of the newspaper.

Janet Kremenitzer took an opportunity to "plug" the accreditation process on a radio talk show, WLAD Dialog 80 in Danbury, Connecticut. While being interviewed about preschool education, Janet mentioned a recently accredited program, the Danbury Salvation Army, where she is an educational consultant.

Elaine Yamashita, director of Ala Lani Preschool, the only accredited program on the island of Maui, Hawaii, reports that the preschool received press coverage throughout the year, mentioning accreditation each time. A television station that airs vignettes called "Kidsbreak" and is producing a program on child care in Hawaii, filmed at the Ala Lani Preschool because the program is accredited and interviewed Elaine.

Keep Hazards Under Lock and Key

Programs involved in the self-study process frequently ask about criterion H-20, "What chemicals and potentially dangerous products should be in locked cabinets and why?" Of course, potentially poisonous materials such as prescription medicines should be in locked cabinets. Also substances marked "keep out of reach of children" should be locked. When the criteria were developed, reviewers were concerned that requiring that dangerous products be "inaccessible to children" is insufficient because for some children, nothing is out of reach. As a rule of thumb, if you have doubts about the safety of a product, put it in a locked cabinet to control the risk of an accident.

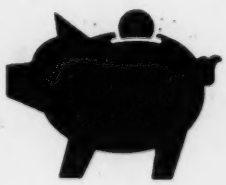
Directors and validators are sometimes unsure how to rate this criterion when chemicals or products are stored on high shelves but not in locked cabinets. If a product is out of reach of children as judged by the director or validator, but not in a locked cabinet, the criterion should be rated a "2". If the product is judged accessible to children, the criterion rates a "1". Any rating of "1" or "2" requires the director and/or validator to add a comment explaining why the criterion is not fully met.

In an article in the September 1988 issue of *Child Care Information Exchange*, "Chemical Hazards in Child Care," Susan S. Aronson, MD, points out that many toxic materials may be in a child care facility and on playgrounds. Chemical hazards may be more difficult to recognize than other sources of injury. Potentially poisonous substances are numerous, including: pesticides, plants, art materials, cleaning agents, fuel by-products, cigarette smoke, building materials, improperly fired ceramics, ground soil that gives off radon, and asbestos.

Dr. Aronson emphasizes that concerned child care professionals want to protect children against chemical hazards, but also need to protect themselves and their families. She recommends getting advice from experts to control chemical hazards.

CIGNA Pays Dividends

CIGNA provides insurance coverage to early childhood programs through NAEYC. CIGNA is proud to announce that it will pay dividends to NAEYC insured centers this year. In November and December, CIGNA will disburse $1,395,000 in dividends to 2,426 centers, an average of $575 per center! This is the third straight year CIGNA has paid dividends to NAEYC programs. For information on obtaining CIGNA insurance, call Bob LoConte, MarketDyne International, 1-800-523-2710 or 215-241-2644.



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Accreditation: A Strategy for Recruiting and Retaining Staff

"Why should we get involved with accreditation? The unemployment rate is 2.4%. The pool of workers is so small we can hardly find qualified staff. Directors are even competing to lure staff away from each other," said a frustrated director at a session on accreditation in Delaware as other participants nodded in agreement.

The crisis in hiring and maintaining qualified staff is not unique to Delaware. Throughout the country directors report difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff. While accreditation may seem like a low priority under these circumstances, pursuing accreditation can be a viable strategy for countering the staffing crisis.

Directors of accredited programs report success in recruiting staff by advertising their accreditation status. One director said that applications doubled when the advertisement mentioned that the program is accredited. Many applicants want to work in a good program.

How can accreditation assist directors in retaining staff? In her book, *A Great Place to Work: Professional Climate in Programs for Young Children*, Paula Jorde-Bloom identifies dimensions of organizational climate that support professionalism and commitment in early childhood programs, such as collegiality, clarity, decisionmaking, and goal consensus. These are also goals fostered by accreditation.

Directors report that the self-study/accreditation process unifies staff and strengthens morale. While accreditation alone cannot solve the staffing crisis, it can aid recruitment and enhance job satisfaction of employees.

Academy Mentors

Helping Directors Save Time

Recently, the Academy implemented a new project to increase the numbers of programs that successfully complete accreditation. This new project — training mentors who are experienced with accreditation to assist directors going through the process — has enormous potential for improving the quality of early childhood programs throughout the country.

Who are mentors?

Most often, mentors are directors of accredited programs who are also validators. The role of a mentor is to help directors overcome the major obstacle to achieving accreditation — limited time. By conducting orientation meetings, mentors help directors become familiar with the materials and process more quickly than if they work alone. By developing support groups, mentors provide directors an opportunity to interact with others in similar situations. Directors share strategies and motivate each other to complete the self-study and achieve its full benefits for their programs.

What do mentors do?

Mentors assist directors in negotiating the system. Mentors help directors understand procedures for completing the self-study. An Academy mentor does *not* interpret the criteria or provide consultation on program improvement. Only Academy staff are authorized to interpret the criteria. Academy mentors are volunteers. However, NAEYC reimburses all expenses related to the mentors' participation such as mileage, refreshments for meetings, and phone calls.

A mentor training model was successfully piloted this year in Miami in January, funded by the Mailman Family Foundation, and in San Francisco in February, funded by James Irvine Foundation and the Ahmanson Foundation. Academy mentors are provided videotapes, handouts, brochures, and demonstration sets of materials to conduct at least 4 meetings in their local area or state during a 1-year period. Meetings are either general information sessions about accreditation or if sufficient interest exists, the mentor establishes a support group of interested directors that meet regularly as their centers work toward accreditation.

The Academy plans to implement mentor training nationally. Mentor trainings, funded by Mervyn's, were conducted for the northwest states in August in Seattle and for the southwest in Phoenix. NAEYC has budgeted for mentor trainings to be held at regional conferences to provide mentors in states where no foundation funding is available. So far, trainings are planned for 1989 at Midwest AEYC in Minneapolis and at SACUS in Richmond. By training individuals from several states at these gatherings, mentors will be available throughout the country.

A Great Place to Work: Professional Climate in Programs for Young Children by Paula Jorde-Bloom is a 1988-89 NAEYC Comprehensive Membership benefit. Order additional copies for $5 each (# 250) from NAEYC.

Deferral of Accreditation: Is It the End?

What happens when a program's accreditation decision is deferred? Deferral is not the end of the accreditation process. For many programs, it is the beginning. When a program's accreditation is deferred, it receives a Commission Decision Report explaining why the program was deferred and suggesting recommendations for improvement. The program examines its options such as appealing the decision, requesting another visit, or making needed improvements, and decides whether or not to pursue accreditation.

The goal of the accreditation system is to improve the quality of care and education provided for young children in group programs. As evidence that this goal is being achieved, 85% of deferred programs have made recommended improvements and successfully achieved accreditation. Here are examples of how some deferred programs have improved.

One program was deferred because the curriculum was too academic and teacher directed. The program revised the curriculum by using NAEYC's *Developmentally Appropriate Practice* as a guide for staff training. The program changed its approach to be more child-initiated and developmentally appropriate.

In one program the group sizes were much too large due to an open space physical plant. The large groups were divided into smaller groups and teachers were assigned to primary groups of children to reduce the psychological size of the group for children.

One program had no running water in a toddler classroom and could not afford the additional expense of plumbing. The director obtained a camp sink and helped make teachers' jobs easier while meeting the criterion.

These programs saw deferral as an opportunity to make further improvements. The Academy encourages all deferred programs to continue the pursuit of accreditation.

The goal of the accreditation system is to improve the quality of care and education provided for young children in group programs.

Continuing to Improve *After* Accreditation

Even programs that achieve accreditation continue to improve. The staff of Perry Kay Nursery School and Kindergarten in Southfield, Michigan agreed to take an active role in maintaining the accreditation standards. Their decision was to review all the criteria annually, make a daily effort to participate in developmentally appropriate practices, and prepare materials that promote these practices by planning workshops, meetings, and presenting at parent and professional meetings. Some of their accomplishments were:

Two teachers teamed together and developed a slide presentation on developmentally appropriate activities for 4- and 5-year old children. Adaptations were made in the presentation for parent or teacher groups.

One staff person introduced the accreditation materials to the student teachers that participated in the school program during the year. This staff person also reviewed the materials with new teachers who came into the program during the past year.

The director, Kay Koulouras, purchased the self-study videos and loans them to others who are interested in accreditation. Kay or members of the staff arrange to show the videos to parents in small groups or have them available for parents to view individually at their convenience. Afterwards, the parents discuss the video with a staff member. This arrangement makes it possible for all staff to be familiar with the videos and helps to meet the program's goal of increasing parent participation.

According to Kay, "These activities enable each of us to serve as personal ambassadors of the accreditation system and promote the opportunity for an active role to the commitment we make as professional early childhood teachers and leaders. Because of these kinds of experiences, our staff feels that accreditation has rewarded us by encouraging our own personal and professional development and active participation within our early childhood community."

Attention: Validators

Thank You!

The Academy staff wishes to thank you for contributing your time and energy to the accreditation process. We sincerely appreciate your valuable assistance.

Keep in Touch!

When you agree to do a validation visit, please call the director at least 3 days in advance to confirm your time of arrival, get directions, and clarify any other information. Directors become very anxious when they do not hear from you in advance.

If you do not receive the validation materials at least 3 days prior to a scheduled visit, please call the Academy office. Materials are mailed by UPS and the staff needs sufficient time to trace them if they become lost. Directors spend a lot of time preparing for the visit and prefer to keep the prearranged dates.

Maintain Confidentiality!

One of the keys to the success of NAEYC's accreditation system is validators' ability to maintain confidentiality regarding information obtained about programs during validation visits. The only public information about centers involved in the accreditation process is the list of accredited programs. Other accreditation systems, such as those for hospitals and universities, ensure confidentiality of site visits by using teams of validators from out-of-state. However, hospitals and universities can afford to pay higher fees for accreditation than early childhood programs. To make accreditation affordable for centers, NAEYC uses local validators and relies on their ethical behavior in reporting conflicts of interest and maintaining confidentiality. This is a reminder to validators that maintaining confidentiality about visits is very important. The credibility of our accreditation system depends on your professional integrity.

66

Our validators were warm and friendly, yet very thorough and professional.

— a director in Texas

99

Involving Employed Parents in Child Care

Providing opportunities for parent involvement is one of the criteria for accreditation, but many programs find it difficult to involve employed parents. One accredited program, Neighborhood House Association in Plainfield, New Jersey came up with the idea of the Parents Rainbow Club. To become a member of the club, a parent has to take a day off and spend it in the classroom. After their volunteer day, the parents are awarded a rainbow pin at the Parent Organization Meeting. The club earned its name because at the end of every rainbow is usually a pot of gold. At Neighborhood House, POT stands for Parents Organized with Teachers. Director Evelyn Motley says that the club is worth its weight in gold.

Parent volunteers participate in their choice of activities including story reading, lunchtime, naptime, outdoor play, special projects, field trips, or art activities. Parents also choose which group of children they wish to work with. Parents are recruited for the club by posters that state, "You pay $xxx a week of your hard earned money for quality child care. You owe it to yourself and your child to find out exactly what you are paying for!"

New! New! New!

Early Childhood Program Accreditation: A Commitment to Excellence

A new accreditation brochure is now available from NAEYC. The brochure is ideal for parents who may be seeking quality early childhood programs, employers looking to support employees' child care needs, or the general public. The Academy sends a free copy with requests for the list of accredited centers. Single copies of this brochure are 50¢ each; 100 copies are $10. Order NAEYC #538, 1834 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20009.

GAO Requests Information on Cost of Program Quality

Senator Edward Kennedy, sponsor of proposed Smart Start legislation, requested that the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) obtain information on the cost of operating quality early childhood programs. To assist GAO's data collection, the Academy provided a list of accredited programs. GAO may contact accredited programs requesting information for the study. Participation is strictly voluntary.

Healthy Young Children

A Manual for Programs

NAEYC's newest publication, *Healthy Young Children: A Manual for Programs*, contains the most current research and recommendations from experts in health and early education. It's a must for your library! This manual will help you avoid the spread of infection, prevent tragic injuries through frequent site safety checks, care for mildly ill children, and teach children and staff good hygienic practices.

The manual is a 1987-88 NAEYC Comprehensive Membership benefit. If you are not a Comprehensive member, order the manual from NAEYC.

Don't forget the brochure, "*Keeping Healthy: Parents, Teachers, and Children*," and companion information poster, "*Rx for Keeping Healthy in Group Programs*."

- ***Healthy Young Children*** (book) order #704 $12
- ***Keeping Healthy*** (brochure) order #577 50¢ each; $10 for 100
- ***Rx for Keeping Healthy*** (poster) order #777 $4

To order, write NAEYC, or call 202-232-8777 or 800-424-2460. Orders less than $20 must be prepaid.

Quality Child Care:

It's A Business Issue

Keep the spirit of Child Care America alive! Copies of the Child Care America National Business Teleconference, funded by American Express, are now available on video cassette. The tape examines the impact of our nation's child care crisis and shows what businesses can do to increase affordable, quality child care. It's a great tool for education and coalition building among business, government, and community groups.

To order: send a check for $10 made payable to Child Care America Video or charge on your American Express Card. Send to: Child Care America Video, P.O. Box 5010, Ronkonkoma, NY 11779. For more information, call Frank Vaccaro (212) 640-3327 at American Express Corporate Communications.

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Don't Miss These Sessions at the NAEYC Annual Conference

Check the final conference program for locations.

Accreditation Sessions

General Information

Friday, November 11, 11:30 - 12:30

A general information session will be held for directors to find out how their programs can become accredited and the benefits of accreditation for programs and the profession.

Help with Self-Study

Saturday, November 12, 10:00 - 11:30

A how-to session will be held for directors who have received self-study materials to obtain technical assistance from Academy staff and other directors who have completed the process.

Accredited Programs

Friday, November 11, 5:00 - 6:00

Directors and staff members of NAEYC accredited programs are invited to a meeting with Academy staff. This is an excellent opportunity to share experiences, network with other professionals from accredited programs, and offer suggestions about accreditation.

Validator Refresher Training

Friday, November 11, either 1:00 - 2:30 or 3:00 - 4:30

Validators can share experiences with other validators and Academy staff and refresh their memory about validation procedures by attending one of two refresher training sessions for previously trained validators.

Health in Child Care: What's Happening?

Thursday, November 10, 9:00 - 5:00

This preconference session is presented by the American Academy of Pediatrics and American Public Health Association to update conferees on their joint project to develop national health and safety standards for out-of-home child care programs. These comprehensive standards are intended to become a national reference for child care providers and state licensing agencies. This session provides the latest information available in the field of health in child care and an opportunity for early childhood professionals to discuss and provide feedback on the proposed standards.

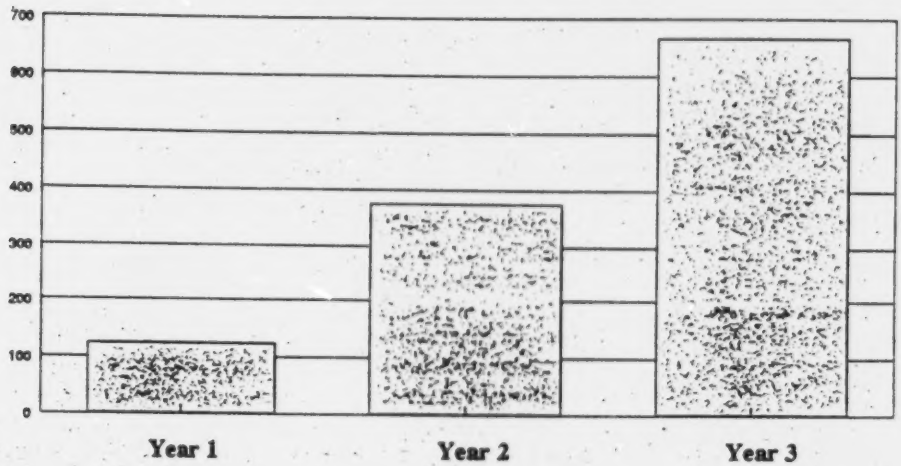
An Afternoon with the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)

Friday, November 11, 1:00 - 5:00

Expert pediatricians from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) will present highlights of what's happening in health in child care, dialog with pediatricians, update on pediatric AIDS and other infectious diseases. Come with your questions and concerns.

See You in Anaheim!

We're Growing!



Number of Early Childhoood Programs Accredited by the Academy

ACADEMY *Update*

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ACADEMY Update

Early childhood professionals collaborating for quality

Volume 3 Number 2 Winter 1989

PS 023954

Academy Update

Early childhood professionals collaborating for quality

Academy Update is published by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, a division of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. The Academy administers the only professionally sponsored, national, voluntary accreditation system for preschools, child care centers, and school-age child care programs. The Academy's purpose is to improve and recognize the quality of care and education provided for young children in early childhood programs. *Academy Update* supports this goal by providing early childhood professionals, including directors, validators, and commissioners, involved in accreditation with current information and feedback on the system.

Articles in *Academy Update* may be reprinted without permission. You must cite the following information with the reprinted material: "Reprinted from *Academy Update* (volume number and issue), a publication of the National Association for the Education of Young Children."

The Academy welcomes your comments. Address them to

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naeyc

Academy Reviews Criteria

1989 brings a new phase of NAEYC's accreditation system as the first accredited programs begin the reaccreditation process. In addition, the Academy is initiating a review of the accreditation Criteria. Periodic review of standards is an essential component of a credible accreditation system. Under the guidance of the Academy Advisory Panel, the Criteria will be reviewed to ensure that they are accurate, current, inclusive, and effective in accomplishing the goals of the system.

One of the most gratifying findings of the first 3 years of operation of the Academy has been how well the system works. As a result, no major revisions in the Criteria are anticipated. Changes will occur only if they are essential to maintaining the integrity of the system.

The Criteria were originally developed based on extensive review of current research and practice, with opportunity for input from any NAEYC member. A similar process will be followed for Criteria review. *The Academy invites recommendations for any additions or revisions to the accreditation Criteria from all interested early childhood professionals.* We are particularly interested in suggestions from directors of accredited programs, validators, and commissioners. The following steps will be used for reviewing and revising the Criteria:

1. Suggested revisions will be accepted by the Academy at NAEYC Headquarters until April 15, 1989.

2. The Academy Advisory Panel will review all recommended revisions, analyze the potential impact of each recommended revision to the Criteria, and determine which revisions will be considered further.

3. The proposed revisions will be disseminated for public review and comment through the *Academy Update* (sent to all directors in self-study/accreditation, validators, commissioners, and Affiliate presidents and Academy liaisons) in spring 1989.

4. An open hearing on the revisions will be held during the NAEYC Annual Conference in Atlanta in November 1989.

5. The Academy Advisory Panel will consider all information collected and make final recommendations on Criteria revisions to the NAEYC Governing Board for approval in April 1990.

All directors of accredited programs, validators, commissioners and Affiliate Groups are encouraged to participate in this important process for ensuring the highest professional standards in early childhood programs.

NAEYC Office Hours
Changing to Serve You Better

As of February 1, 1989, NAEYC office hours have been changed to 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Eastern Standard Time, Monday through Friday.

Frequently Asked Questions about Arranging

Validation Visits

Q. *What do I send the Academy?*

A. Mail the completed Program Description, the Classroom Observation Summary Sheet, and your check or money order for the validation fee. As a precaution, we encourage you to make a copy of the Program Description and Summary Sheet before mailing them to us.

Q. *How long will it take to set up the visit?*

A. The Academy will schedule your validation visit within 30 working days of receipt of your materials.

Q. *How will the visit be scheduled?*

A. Academy staff will call you after receiving your materials to ask you to give us 5 or 6 days in the next month when no special events are planned. We will read you a list of possible validators, to ensure no conflict of interest, and locate one who is available on one of the dates you've given us. We will call you with the date and follow-up with a confirmation letter.

Important Criterion Clarified

Criterion B-4e—The daily schedule provides a balance of child-initiated/staff-initiated activities.

Many programs rate themselves fully met on criterion B-4e because they provide children with 1- to 2-hour blocks of free play time sandwiched between 1 to 2 hours of teacher-directed activities. Such long periods of teacher-directed, full group activities are not developmentally appropriate for young children and do not merit a rating of 3.

Attention: Accredited Programs

When submitting your Annual Report, please include a Certificate of Insurance indicating that accident protection and liability coverage are maintained for children and adults (criterion E-8). Do not send the policy.

Validators

During your interview with the director about non-validated criteria, if the director chooses not to respond, write "*D—No comment*" in the appropriate space on the Program Description.

Student Teachers OK'd for Accredited Programs

Because few public schools operate pre-kindergarten programs in Connecticut, the State Department of Education recently adopted a policy to allow student teacher placements in accredited preschool programs. Although the state imposed guidelines for placements, early childhood professionals are pleased that the State Department recognizes the high quality existing in non-public, accredited preschool programs. This new policy, which may provide incentive for programs to go through the accreditation process, was influenced by the efforts of many CT-AEYC members, including Carla Horwitz and Helene Lilienthal.

Distribution of List of Accredited Programs

The list of accredited programs in a specific geographic area may be obtained by a parent free of charge. However, the distribution of the entire list of accredited programs is carefully controlled by the Academy. The list is not distributed for commercial purposes. Individuals wishing to obtain the list for other purposes, such as research, must submit their request in writing to the Academy and include a detailed description of how the list will be used. If the project is approved, the one-time purchase of the list costs $10 (this is an increase of $5 to reflect the increased length of the list).

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Ignoring Racial and Cultural Differences May Encourage Prejudice in Young Children

Think for a moment about how you would respond if children in your class made statements like these:

"Look teacher that man doesn't have any legs!"

"You can't play with us. You're a girl!"

"Yuck, your skin is brown. Don't sit here!"

Would you stop and talk to the child? What would you say? Would you ignore the child's comments because you're not sure what to say? Or would you choose not to respond because you believe it's better not to point out differences?

NAEYC's newest publication, *Anti-Bias Curriculum: Tools for Empowering Young Children* (#242), helps parents and teachers deal with situations like these. According to the author, Louise Derman-Sparks, "Ignoring differences children plainly see — in skin color, language, physical abilities, and gender — is not an effective way of teaching them to be free from prejudice." Children begin to form racial and cultural biases as early as age 2, and if we want to raise unprejudiced children, we must talk to them about the differences they see.

Derman-Sparks recommends the following do's and don't's:

Don't use the color-blind approach. We used to believe that it was best to fight racial bigotry by saying, "I don't notice if a person is brown or green or purple." We now know such responses don't work. Children do notice differences.

Don't criticize children for asking about people who are different from themselves. Telling a child, for example, that it's not nice to ask about someone in a wheelchair does not stop the child from being curious about the person. But it does leave that child without the information needed to know how to interact comfortably with a disabled person and teaches the child to treat such people as if they were invisible.

Don't believe that simply exposing children to people of other races, ethnic groups, and physical abilities is sufficient to cause them to overcome developing biases. Active intervention by parents and teachers is needed.

Do answer children's questions about themselves and others.

Do create an environment with dolls, books, pictures, and TV programs that reflect images children may not often see.

Do establish a firm rule that one's identity is never an acceptable reason for teasing or rejecting any child. Step in immediately if a child engages in such behavior.

Do teach children how to recognize unfair depictions of different groups, such as stereotypes and caricatures.

NAEYC's accreditation criteria, B-5a (multiracial, nonsexist, materials are available) and B-7h (encourage children to respect cultural diversity), are frequently not met by programs seeking accreditation. Information provided in *Anti-Bias Curriculum* will help teachers and directors understand the importance of, and ways of complying with, these criteria.

Parents shape children's values. A companion brochure to *Anti-Bias Curriculum*, "Teaching Young Children to Resist Bias: What Parents Can Do," is must reading for all parents in your program. (#565, $10 for 100.)

What to Do for Running Water

Is your program having trouble meeting criteria H-14a, 14b, 17a, and 17c because some classrooms do not have a source of running water? NAEYC's newest health resource, *Healthy Young Children: A Manual for Programs* (#704), has a creative and inexpensive alternative for staff and children to wash their hands when plumbing is not available. The manual suggests using a portable water (bubbler) tank and includes a diagram, with options for hot and cold water or cold-water-only bubblers. The health manual may be ordered from NAEYC for $12.

Reaccreditation Procedures

As you know, accreditation is valid for 3 years from the date of the Commission decision. At the end of the first year programs are required to submit an Annual Report of major changes and improvements. But what happens after that?

Approximately 6 weeks prior to the second anniversary of accreditation, the Academy sends the program instructions for pursuing *reaccreditation*. Thus, programs have a year in which to order materials, complete a self-study, and request a validation visit. The visit should be requested no later than 90 days prior to expiration of accreditation. Application and validation fees are the same for reaccreditation as for initial accreditation. (See fee structure on page 7.)

The self-study and validation procedures are identical to those followed for initial accreditation. Undoubtedly, the process will be easier for programs in which the director and/or staff have previously completed the process. For those programs in which the director and/or many staff members are new, experiencing the complete self-study/validation process is essential.

Accredited programs may request to delay their reaccreditation visit for a period of time not to exceed 9 months only if one of the following exists:

1. The program has an acting director or the director will be leaving during the time the visit is to be conducted.

2. The program will relocate during the time the visit is to be conducted.

3. An accident or natural disaster occurs to prevent or prohibit a reaccreditation visit.

4. A merger is in process.

Requests for extensions must be received in writing. If an extension is granted, the anniversary date of reaccreditation remains the same to ensure that by delaying, programs do not get additional accreditation time.

If program staff choose not to be reaccredited, they must request and complete a second annual report. When accreditation expires, programs are required to return all signs and symbols of accreditation. If a program relinquishes accreditation, it may no longer advertise its affiliation with the Academy and should publicly advertise that they have relinquished accreditation. Public notice of relinquishment will prevent public misunderstanding that accreditation was withdrawn for failure to comply with the Criteria.

Maintaining Quality After Accreditation

Now that your program is accredited, how can you stay "high quality?" One innovative director developed a checklist to ensure compliance with accreditation Criteria. Cathy Powell, director of Long Valley Christian Nursery School in New Jersey, developed a monthly teacher self-evaluation checklist. The checklist includes Criteria-related questions such as "Do we offer a balance of indoor/outdoor activities? Is the curriculum developmentally appropriate? Do I listen to children with attention and respect?"

A teacher answers *yes, no,* or *needs improvement.* If she needs improvement, the teacher works alone to improve a weak area or the director uses the criterion for in-service training.

Cathy reports that using the checklist helps staff maintain high quality. She also thinks that ongoing monitoring will make reaccreditation easier.

Reaccreditation: Motivating Staff to Do It Again

You were excited and determined to be among the first accredited programs in your city or state. You and your staff worked very hard and you made it! But soon it will be time for reaccreditation, and you are not sure how to motivate staff to do it again. Directors of accredited programs shared these tips with us:

•Discuss the goal and benefits of accreditation with staff.

•Involve staff in the decision to seek reaccreditation. Motivating staff to do the process will be much easier if staff are part of the decision.

•Approach reaccreditation as a team.

•Review how you conducted the self-study the first time.

•Discuss ways to make it easier.

•Determine tasks and timelines in staff meetings.

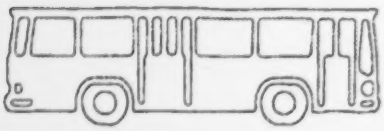
•Pair "veterans" with new staff and delegate responsibilities.

•Hold regular meetings to brainstorm strategies for improving compliance.

•Design a tasks and timelines chart to help staff visualize their accomplishments.

•Always include accreditation information in new staff orientation.

The self-study, the heart of accreditation, is designed to make real and lasting changes in programs by creating a "we're all in this together" feeling. Although programs must document compliance with the Criteria, there is flexibility for collecting data and making improvements. Reaccreditation should be approached in the same manner.



Good Programs Transport Children Safely

Fact 1—Traffic accidents are one of the leading causes of death in young children.

Fact 2—Proper child safety seats help prevent death and injury.

We know you properly install car seats and require children to "buckle up for safety" when you transport children in your program. But does your transportation safety awareness stop there? It shouldn't. Criterion H-6 requires that centers that transport children equip vehicles with age-appropriate restraint devices, but you should also be sure your entire transportation system is safe. Check your procedures against these transportation safety standards described on page 30 of *Accreditation Criteria and Procedures.*

The appropriate restraints (infant safety seats, toddler auto seats, auto booster seats, and/or safety belts) must be used whenever the vehicle is in motion. Appropriate supervision for children under 6 requires that attendants, in addition to the driver, be present. All drivers must be appropriately licensed and trained in child passenger safety precautions. No child should be left unattended in a vehicle. Vehicles used in transporting children must be appropriately licensed, inspected, and maintained.

If you transport children, even periodically for excursions, be sure your program complies with all state and local laws.

Curriculum — What Is It?

Ask any elementary education teacher to tell you about her curriculum and she will. She'll probably say that she teaches reading, math, science, and social studies and she may even list the commercial textbooks the school system requires. Ask an early childhood teacher the same question and you will probably get a variety of answers. An academically oriented teacher will list the "skills" she teaches: letter, number, and shape recognition; listening; and writing. A play-oriented teacher might respond with a "list of activities" that children select from each day, or she might outline a philosophy and approach to child development as her curriculum.

What is an appropriate curriculum in an early childhood program? NAEYC recently described appropriate ways to teach young children in its publication, *Developmentally Appropriate Practice*. That position statement provides guidance on *how to teach* in early childhood programs, but it does not address *what to teach*. The next task is for the profession to provide clearer guidance about appropriate curriculum content and ways of assessing children's development and learning.

During 1989, NAEYC, in collaboration with the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education, will develop Guidelines for Appropriate Curriculum Content and Assessment in the Early Childhood Unit (schools serving children from age 3 through third grade). This project will include experts from the subject matter disciplines and school administration, as well as early childhood and assessment experts. NAEYC welcomes recommended resources and suggestions on curriculum and assessment. Please send your ideas to Sue Bredekamp at NAEYC Headquarters.

Promoting Accreditation to Millions

Watch for articles about accreditation in upcoming issues of *Good Housekeeping* and *Sesame Street's Parents' Guide*. Did you know *Good Housekeeping* has a circulation of 20 million and that 1.5 million parents of preschoolers read *Sesame Street's Parents' Guide*? Educating parents about accreditation through mass media will help them make better decisions for their children.

What Accreditation Has Meant to Our Program

by Cheryl Devine

Rutgers University Child Care Center, New Brunswick, New Jersey

Being accredited by the National Academy has been a very positive experience and more than anything has raised staff morale. In a field with inadequate pay and little respect from society in general, finally someone recognized the fine job we do in early childhood.

As we went through the self-study, it was rewarding right away because we realized we were meeting many of the Criteria already, and with a little more effort could meet most of the Criteria. The self-study/validation experience gave us the impetus to want to improve our program.

More than 2 years later, we are still so proud of our accomplishment that we will not let anything jeopardize our accountability. The staff is so proud that even now when new employees come into the program, they "catch" the pride and continue the effort. The children benefit, staff benefit, parents benefit, and other programs will benefit from this experience. So go for it!

101st Congress Gets Underway with an Early Focus on Child Care

The 101st Congress has begun where last year's Congress left off, with comprehensive child care legislation near the top of the agenda. Several bills have already been introduced, with slightly amended versions of the ABC bill leading the way. Senator Dodd's subcommittee on Children, Families, Drugs, and Alcoholism has already held a hearing on quality child care. Prior to the hearing, NAEYC's Sue Bredekamp, Academy Director, and Barbara Willer, Public Affairs Director, conducted a briefing for Senate staffers on NAEYC's accreditation system, describing the process and the research basis for the Academy's Criteria. Single copies of the briefing paper, *Predictors of Quality in Early Childhood Programs*, are available by sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope to *Predictors*, Public Affairs Division, NAEYC, 1834 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20009. Brief highlights of key bills follow:

H.R. 3 Child Development and Education Act

Introduced by Gus Hawkins (D-CA), Chair of the Education and Labor Committee. Designed as an alternative approach to the ABC concept, this bill authorizes $2.5 billion to be divided equally among three titles. Title I would allow Head Start programs to provide child care services and to expand the provision of Head Start on a sliding fee scale to non-income eligible children. Title II would establish early childhood programs in public schools, including programs for 4-year-olds and school-age child care. Title III is written very much like the ABC, with provisions to assist parents in paying the cost of child care and in strengthening the child care infrastructure. However, paying the costs of care is limited to infants and toddlers, and it appears the infrastructure provisions may also be limited. Another key difference from the ABC is that program participation under Title III would be limited to nonprofit providers (including family day care.) Also included in Title III is a 5% allotment for encouraging employer-supported child care.

H.R. 30 House Act for Better Child Care (ABC)

Introduced by Rep. Dale Kildee, this year's version of the ABC is essentially the same as that which emerged from committee mark-up last summer. The major changes include additional provisions for encouraging employer-assisted child care, limiting the age of participation up to 12 years, and allowing the reimbursement of care by grandparents. Also, the provision that states must bring their licensing codes into compliance with national standards is now limited to licensing of programs receiving public funds. Regulation of relative care is left to state discretion.

S. 5 Senate ABC

This year's Senate version of ABC has emerged with strong bipartisan support, with Senators Chris Dodd (D-CT), Ted Kennedy (D-MA), Orrin Hatch (R-UT), and Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), as chief co-sponsors. The bill represents a compromise worked out at the end of the last congress. Major changes include the inclusion of a liability risk retention pool for child care providers, increased provisions for employer-supported child care, greater flexibility for states to comply with national standards, and increased training requirements.

Fees Remain the Same

Accreditation fees have not increased since 1985, but larger programs will be required to pay more in the future. Fees are paid at two points in the process.

1. The application fee is paid to initiate the process and to receive the self-study materials. This fee is determined by the total number of children enrolled regardless of whether they attend on a half-day or full-day basis. For this fee, the center receives the self-study materials including multiple copies of the Observation form and Staff and Parent Questionnaires. (The Parent Questionnaire is available in Spanish.) Allow 3 weeks for delivery.

2. The validation fee is paid if, based on the results of the self-study, a program decides to pursue accreditation. This fee is determined by the largest number of children attending on a given day. For this fee, the center receives an on-site validation visit and the accreditation decision.

Accreditation Fee Structure

	Application fee	Validation fee
Enrollment		
Level 1 fewer than 60 children	$50	$200
Level 2 61 to 120 children	$100	$350
Level 3 121 to 240 children	$150	$450
Level 4 241 to 360 children	$200	$550
For each additional 120 children	$50	$100

Free! Free! Free!

Fundraising Resource for Accreditation

Do you know programs that want to pursue accreditation, but are prohibited by fees? Are you involved in self-study and need funds to improve your program? Does your Affiliate Group need help in identifying fundraising sources for programs interested in accreditation?

If you answered *yes* to any of these questions, you may want to obtain a copy of *How to Obtain Financial Assistance for Achieving Accreditation*. This packet of materials, developed by the Academy, is designed to help centers obtain financial assistance from businesses, community organizations, and foundations for achieving accreditation. Materials include (1) a list of potential funding sources, (2) a sample solicitation letter with suggestions for its use, and (3) a sample proposal for funding accreditation fees that can be adapted to solicit funds for center improvements to achieve accreditation.

To get your free copy of *How to Obtain Financial Assistance for Achieving Accreditation*, call or write the Academy.

Hiring Consultants: Buyer Beware

Today's consumers are better educated than ever before. We read labels, ask about warranties, and search for quality at the best price. We ask salespeople many questions before making a major purchase. We want to make informed decisions.

A few programs have hired consultants to help improve quality before seeking accreditation, although this is not required by the Academy. If you choose to hire a consultant, the Academy encourages you to be an educated consumer. Just as salespeople often make "promises" to get you to buy their product, potential consultants may misrepresent their ability to ensure a positive accreditation decision to get your business. Buyer beware: no individual or training program can guarantee a positive accreditation decision.

Be wary if

- a consultant continually says you aren't ready to request a validation visit. Is she prolonging the process just to stay on your payroll?

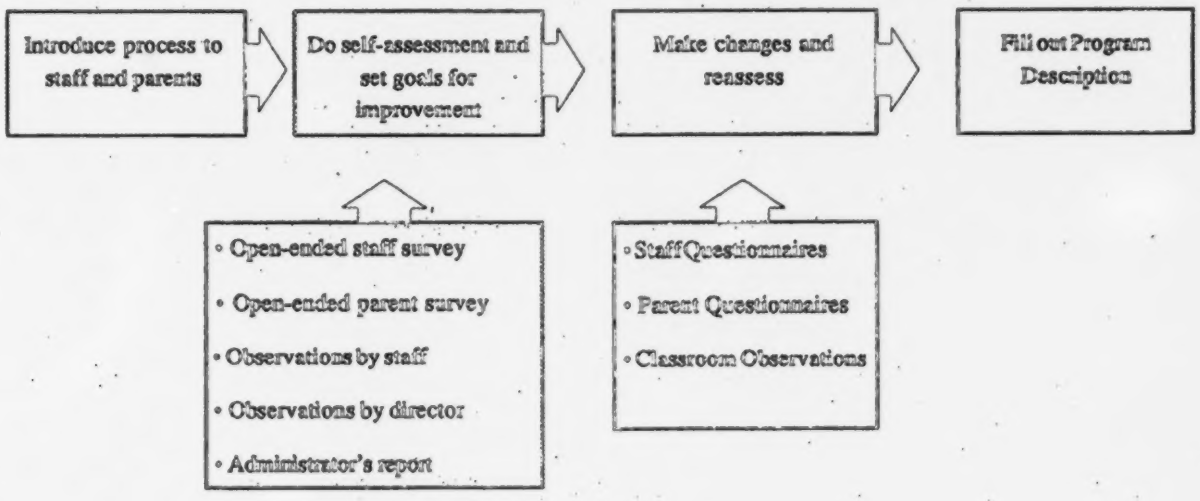
- a validator solicits consultation work on the visit. This is highly unethical and should be reported to the Academy. However, a director may hire whomever she or he chooses. To prevent a potentially uncomfortable situation, it is best for validators and directors to wait until after the accreditation decision has been made before working together.

Having trouble getting staff to wash their hands? One program found an effective reminder—the kids!

Self-Study Flow Chart

Sandy Foreman and Ellen Montanari, Academy liaisons in Arizona, developed this flow chart to graphically depict the self-study process. Directors, staff, consultants, and "visual learners" may find it helpful in understanding the sequence of tasks involved in self-study.

All tasks listed here under self-assessment are not required by the Academy. The open-ended staff and parent surveys are optional (*Guide to Accreditation*, pages 94 and 109). Directions for doing a self-study begin on page 5 of the *Guide*.


Introduce process to staff and parents
Do self-assessment and set goals for improvement
Make changes and reassess
Fill out Program Description
◦ Open-ended staff survey
◦ Open-ended parent survey
◦ Observations by staff
◦ Observations by director
◦ Administrator's report
◦ Staff Questionnaires
◦ Parent Questionnaires
◦ Classroom Observations

ACADEMY *Update*

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ACADEMY Update

Early childhood professionals collaborating for quality

Volume 3 Number 3 Spring–Summer 1989

PS 020354

Academy Update

Early childhood professionals collaborating for quality

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naeyc

Accolades to All!

As of June 1989, more than 1,000 programs are accredited representing all 50 states. This spring, more than 350 validation visits occurred. NAEYC wishes to thank all the validators and commissioners whose voluntary contributions of time and expertise made accreditation possible. NAEYC wishes to acknowledge the hard work and commitment to quality of all the directors and staff members whose programs achieved accreditation.

Academy Reviews Criteria

The National Academy of Early Childhood Programs is reviewing the accreditation Criteria to ensure that they are accurate, current, inclusive, and effective in identifying high quality programs for young children. Periodic review of standards is an essential component of a credible accreditation system. One of the most gratifying findings of the first 3 years of operation has been how well the system works. As a result, no major revisions in the Criteria are anticipated.

The Criteria were originally developed based on extensive review of current research and practice, with input from thousands of NAEYC members. A similar process is being used for criteria review. Suggested revisions were solicited through *Young Children* and the *Update*. The Academy Advisory Panel thoroughly reviewed all recommended revisions to analyze the potential impact of the changes. The proposed revisions are described here for public review and comment. Please review these proposed changes and send your comments in writing no later than October 15 to Sue Bredekamp at NAEYC Headquarters.

Please note that these are proposed revisions ONLY. Do not suggest additional criteria unless you have reviewed the complete set of criteria in *Accreditation Criteria and Procedures of the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs*. The Academy Advisory Panel will hold an open hearing at the NAEYC Conference in Atlanta on Friday, November 3, at 1:00 p.m.

Proposed Revisions and Additions

Refer to *Accreditation Criteria and Procedures* for the complete statement of the existing criterion. Proposed additions are noted in quotation marks.

A-8b—Staff help children deal with anger, sadness, and frustration "by comforting, identifying and reflecting feelings, and helping children use words to

"Criteria" cont. on p. 2

"Criteria" cont. from p. 1

B-1 and B-2 regarding curriculum planning will be combined to read: "The program has a written statement of its philosophy and goals for children. The program states specific curriculum goals for children based on knowledge of developmental needs and assessment of individual needs and interests. The learning environment and activities for children reflect the program's philosophy and goals."

B-3—Currently the only criterion addressing special needs children, will be expanded: "When disabled, developmentally delayed, or emotionally disturbed children are served, the staff has specialized training and the group size and staff-child ratio are adjusted. Staff are aware of the identified/diagnosed special needs of individual children and make arrangements to follow through on specific intervention plans. IEPs are developed and implemented in a developmentally appropriate manner. Therapy is developed appropriately and incorporated within classroom activities rather than removing the child from the classroom. Parents are involved in development and use of IEPs. Staff address the needs of parents of children with special needs."

B-4—Addressing the balance of activities in the daily schedule, is often misinterpreted. The following statements will be added: "B-4—The daily schedule provides a balance of activities in consideration of the child's total daily experience. B-4a— All age groups play outdoors daily, weather permitting. B-4b—The schedule provides for alternating periods of quiet and active play. B-4c—No large group activities are included for infants and toddlers. More than one option (individual, small group, large group) is available to children during most of the child's day. B-4e—The amount of time spent in staff-initiated, large group activity is limited."

B-8—Add "The use of media, such as television, films, and videotapes, is limited to developmentally appropriate programming for no more than one hour per day in a full-day program (less in a part-day program); an optional activity is always available; no child is required to view the program; and staff discuss what is viewed with children to develop critical viewing skills."

D-2—Change "business administration" to "training relevant to early childhood program administration such as human resource and financial management."

D-4b—Add "advocacy for early childhood programs and the profession."

E-2—Add policies and procedures for "staff and parents regarding termination of a child's enrollment." One of the most frequent complaints received by the Academy is that a program terminated a child's enrollment without first informing the parents of a problem, trying to work with the parents to resolve the problem, and giving adequate notice for other arrangements and a smooth transition.

E-3—Add NAEYC's antidiscrimination policy.

E-4—Change benefits criterion to reflect more flexible benefits packages currently available. "Benefits packages for full-time staff are negotiated to meet staff members' needs and may include paid leave (annual, sick, and/or personal), medical insurance, retirement, subsidized child care, or other options unique to the situation. Benefits for part-time staff are available on a prorated basis."

E-5—Add attendance records of "staff and children."

E-7—Add "Operating budgets are prepared annually and there is a quarterly reconciliation of expenses to budget."

E-12—Add new criterion: "Staff keep information about children, families, and associates confidential. Staff refrain from commenting about children or families in the presence of other adults or children."

F-2c—Add new criterion: "Substitutes for infants and toddlers are familiar with the children and oriented to children's schedules and individual differences in a systematic way before assignment."

F-2d—Add new criterion: "Volunteers who work with children complete a preassignment orientation and participate in ongoing training."

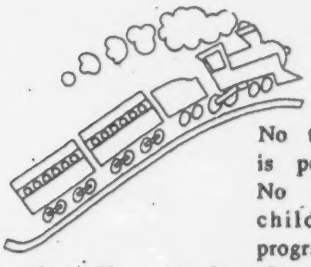
H-10—Specify "cardio-pulmonary resuscitation techniques for infants and children."

H—New criterion on field trips. "Parents are informed about procedures and policies for field trips. Parents are notified of all activities outside the center. Field trips are accompanied by parents and other volunteers to ensure adequate supervision. Field trips are preplanned and emergency procedures are prepared. Transportation meets safety requirements (see H-6).

H-14 and H-17—Change "hot water" references to "water of comfortable temperature." The data on handwashing indicate that the water temperature needs to be comfortable to encourage staff and children to use the amount of friction necessary to clean hands.

J-2—Add "The annual program evaluation examines the adequacy of staff compensation and benefits, and rates of staff turnover, and a plan is developed to ensure recruitment and retention of

"Criteria" cont. on p. 4



Nobody's Perfect

No teacher is perfect. No early childhood program is perfect. No system is perfect. Even excellent teachers, programs, and organizations sometimes make mistakes. What is important is to recognize when a mistake has been made, take immediate action to correct the mistake, and then review procedures to help prevent similar errors in the future.

NAEYC's accreditation system is a decision-making process. To ensure accurate decisions, we collect information from many sources, use several perspectives in the decision, and have checks and balances that protect all involved parties. Most of the time the system works well. Good programs get accredited. Programs that need to make additional improvements, are deferred until improvements have been made. But even with our carefully developed procedures, we sometimes make mistakes.

Two types of errors are possible. Type 1 errors happen if we turn down a program that should be accredited. This type of mistake is painful for the director and staff of the program and can be embarrassing for all of us. But it is a mistake that can be corrected relatively easily. The Academy has detailed appeals procedures. All deferred programs have several options including automatically appealing to a second Commission, requesting another visit if a validator did not follow proper procedures, or submitting additional information. Approximately 12% of all programs are deferred on the first try, and of those, about 85% have gone on to achieve accreditation.

Unfortunately, Type 2 errors can also occur. These are the rare situations when a program gets accredited that should not have been. Perhaps a validator did not observe carefully, did not visit on a "normal" day, or was misled in some way. These types of errors are very difficult, but not impossible, to correct. The biggest obstacle to correcting a Type 2 error is discovering it. When we turn down a good program, we hear vehement complaints from directors or owners. But if we accredit a poor program by mistake, the Academy staff is often the last to know. We may find out about it because people in public meetings make statements like, "I don't want my program to get accredited if that program is" or we detect surprise or disappointment in an Affiliate member's voice when they learn of an accreditation decision.

Remember, we're not perfect. We can only correct our mistakes if we know about them. Type 2 errors get corrected via the Academy's complaint procedures. Any parent, early childhood professional, or other interested party, who has firsthand knowledge that an accredited program is not meeting the accreditation Criteria, may submit a complaint in writing to the Academy. Written complaints must be signed and include a return address for a response, but if requested, the complainant's identity will be kept confidential.

For the Academy to act on a complaint, it must be specific and it must relate to one or more of the criteria. If someone writes, "The program has gone down hill" or "The teacher was unprofessional," we do not have sufficient information to take action. All written complaints are reviewed to determine whether they are relevant to the accreditation Criteria. For example, we do not have a criterion that all parents must be completely satisfied with all aspects of the program. Sometimes, parent complaints are legitimate but irrelevant to our standards.

The Academy notifies the program of the complaint and asks that they respond in writing or submit to a site visit. The Academy reserves the right to withdraw accreditation on the basis of evidence of noncompliance with the Criteria. Withdrawal of accreditation would occur only if the level of compliance were comparable to other deferred programs. Since 100% compliance is not required for accreditation, a program may receive additional recommendations for improvement as the result of a complaint.

One important aspect of our accreditation process is that it is based on information that is verified at a single point in time. That means that if a program's compliance deteriorates considerably during the 3-year period of accreditation, the Academy needs to be informed. It also means that we do not accredit programs based on reputation. Sometimes, when we query a complainant about her or his experience with the program, that person's opinion is based on something heard several years ago. We know that programs change over time, and we also know that some changes improve quality, while others impair it.

Accreditation is a professional activity. Its credibility and integrity depend on the ethical and professional behavior of all participants. If an early childhood professional has a legitimate concern about an accredited or deferred program, it is her or his professional responsibility to notify the Academy. At the same time, programs voluntarily participate in accreditation and we are obligated to treat them fairly, equitably, and with due process.

No, we're not perfect, but with the support and help of all early childhood professionals, we will continue to do our best on behalf of children.

"Criteria" cont. from p. 2

qualified staff and continuity of relationships."

Review of Staffing Criteria

Since some school-age child care programs seeking accreditation serve children older than 8, the staff-child ratio criterion F-2—will be expanded for 9- through 12-year-olds—Recommended: 1:12 ratio with group size of 24; acceptable: 1:14 ratio with group of 28.

The Academy Advisory Panel debated the current standards on staff-child ratio. Because staff-child ratio requirements have such a major impact on the economics of child care and because staff-child ratio is such a powerful predictor of quality for children, decisions about ratio requirements are critical. The Academy Advisory Panel does not propose revisions in the current staff-child ratio and group size criteria, but does welcome review and comment from all interested parties.

Additional Examples and Indicators

In addition to the proposed criterion changes listed above, many of the Criteria will be clarified by the addition of examples or indicators that have been suggested by directors and validators. With consultation from the School-Age Child Care Project, the examples for school-agers will be expanded. Among the proposed additions are:

A-1—"Staff actively seek meaningful conversations with children."

A-2—"Staff are aware of the activities of the entire group even when dealing with a smaller group; staff position themselves strategically and look up often from involvement frequently."

A-3b—"Staff include child in conversations; describe actions, experiences, and events, listen and respond to children's comments and suggestions."

A-4a/B-7h—"Staff provide books, dolls, toys, wall decorations (photos and pictures), and recordings that reflect diverse images that children may not see elsewhere. Make it a firm rule that a person's identity (age, race, ethnicity, or disability) is never an acceptable reason for teasing or rejecting them. Initiate activities and discussions to build positive self-identity and teach the value of differences. Talk positively about each child's physical characteristics and cultural heritage." (These and other examples will be cited from *Anti-Bias Curriculum* by Louise Derman-Sparks.)

A-5—"School-agers are involved in curriculum planning."

A-6a—Change "positive reinforcement" to "encouragement of appropriate behavior." Add: "Staff describe the situation to encourage children's evaluation of the problem rather than impose the solution. Staff do not force children to apologize or explain their behavior but help children recognize another child's feelings."

A-9—Change "praise" to "recognize and encourage prosocial behaviors."

B-5b—Add "action/reaction toys"

B-5e—Add "complex, manipulative toys (connecting or interlocking toys, jigsaw puzzles)"

B-7a—For school-age—"Provide ways to ensure privacy. Plan cooperative rather than competitive activities. Recognize preferences for self-selected peer groups."

B-7b—For school-agers—"Focus on activities rather than outcomes (scores, winners)."

B-7c—For infants/toddlers—"Avoid interruptions of children's activities."

B-7d—For infants/toddlers—"Describe children's and adults' actions and the events that occur in the child's environment."

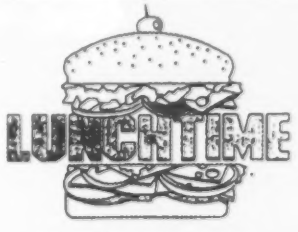
B-7f—"Describe routine health activities to infants and toddlers as they are implemented. Include discussions of self-care for older school-agers."

B-7g—Add "Most art activities are offered as an exploratory process rather than to produce a product. Adult-made models, patterns, and pre-drawn forms are used infrequently." Add for infants/toddlers—"Display interesting things to look at."

G-4—"Materials are rotated and adapted to maintain children's interest."

Additional examples may be added to clarify the intent of an individual criterion.

Validators: Maintain Confidentiality!



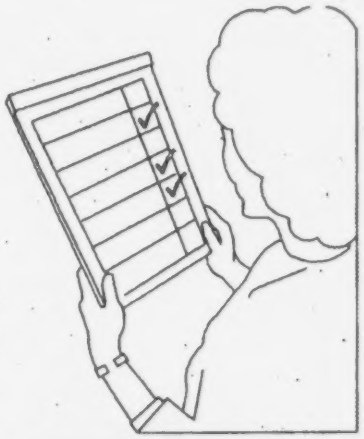
No Free Lunch

Directors should not feel obligated to serve lunch to validators. Validators volunteer their time, but all their expenses, including lunch are reimbursed by NAEYC.

What Do You Mean, Not Validated?

The validation visit is a vital part of the accreditation process. When the Academy trains validators, we emphasize that their role is "to validate, not to evaluate." But when they go on-site, they observe classrooms and make judgments, so how can we say they are not evaluating?

The purpose of the validation visit is to verify the accuracy of the program's written description of their compliance with the Criteria. The validator's role is to collect information and to compare that information to what the center personnel reported. When the validator's rating and the center's report agree, the criterion is validated. When there is a difference in what the validator saw and what the center reported, the criterion is not validated. Whenever a criterion



is not validated, the validator is required to interview the director to obtain additional information and to record on the Program Description the director's and the validator's comments about the difference in ratings.

How is this verification, rather than evaluation? Even if the validator rates the criterion higher than the center rated it, the criterion is not validated. The rating was not verified, regardless of the nature of the difference. The Commission needs additional information about why the validator rated it higher. Did the center improve? Was there a staff change since the self-study? What is the director's perspective on the situation?

The validation process is a collaborative one. As a result, at least two perspectives, the director's and the validator's, are obtained. This information then goes to the Commission so the group can make an informed decision.

If validators were viewed as *evaluators*, we would only be interested in their judgment of compliance and then they would become the decision-makers. Instead, we use Commissioners who are blind to the name of the program, not influenced by personalities, and able to bring national perspective to the evaluation process.

We know it is hard, but directors should try to think of "non-validated" items as their opportunity to supply more information about their program.

New Tools for Advocates

If you really care about improving the quality of child care, now is the time to be heard. It has been almost a generation since the opportunity for passage of major federal legislation to improve child care. In June 1989, the Senate passed the Act for Better Child Care (ABC) and the House is proceeding rapidly (they may have already acted by the time you receive this). This window of opportunity may not open again soon.

Effective advocacy requires accurate information. NAEYC resources help inform policy-makers, parents, and the public about the relationship of high quality programs for children, adequate compensation for staff, and affordability for parents.

Regulating Child Care Quality: Evidence From NAEYC's Accreditation System. S. Bredekamp. This report documents the validity of the accreditation system for measuring quality in early childhood programs, and describes the implications of what we have learned for public policy. #754, $5.

The Growing Crisis in Child Care: Quality, Compensation, and Affordability in Early Childhood Programs. B. Willer. This updated report describes the problems of staff recruitment and retention that are jeopardizing the quality of programs and gives suggestions for action. #751, $5.

Speaking Out: Early Childhood Advocacy. S. G. Goffin & J. Lombardi. A practical guidebook for how public policy is made and what you can do to influence decisions in favor of children's best interests. #270, $6.

The Crisis Is Real: Demographics on the Problems of Recruiting and Retaining Early Childhood Staff. This NEW brochure gives national statistics on earnings, educational levels, and other key facts about the early childhood work force. #550, single copies are 50¢ each; 100 copies are $10.

Where Your Child Care Dollars Go. This brochure stresses the links between program costs and quality for young children and why these costs must be paid. #545, single copies are 50¢ each; 100 copies are $10.

Recognition for Academy's Achievements

Two Anniversaries Are Celebrated

The occasion of the Conference for NAEYC Affiliate Leaders in April 1989 marked two important anniversaries for the Academy—5 years since the field test of accreditation and 3 years since the first set of programs were accredited. Dr. Marilyn Smith, Executive Director of NAEYC, acknowledged these milestones with an inspiring address in which she reflected on our accomplishments. Excerpts of her remarks follow:

"NAEYC's accreditation system is a wonderful example of how organizations promote change. Organizations can study problems and develop tools and resources to address those problems. But they cannot solve problems. Only individuals can solve problems. Individuals use the tools and work with each other to stimulate changes in attitudes, behaviors, and practices.

As we celebrate the anniversary of accreditation, we reflect on how well we have achieved the outcomes that were expected when we developed the system. Those outcomes relate to children, personnel, parents, and the public. As a result of accreditation, programs have improved for children, no matter how good they were before they began the process. Teachers feel pride and accomplishment. Some teachers have been rewarded with increased compensation. Parents are more informed about the components of quality. In accredited programs, parents are more appreciative of the hard work staff do. As a result, parents become promoters of the system. When they relocate, they are likely to seek an accredited center in another community. Finally, there is increased recognition of the importance of quality early childhood programs in the community.

The Effects of Accreditation

In addition to these expected outcomes, accreditation has had many serendipitous effects. It has stimulated professional development. Teachers and directors have been motivated to continue their education. Teachers have obtained their CDA Credentials; directors have completed master's degrees. The training opportunities in colleges and through Affiliate Group conferences have become more focused on the specific elements of quality defined by accreditation. New leadership has emerged in Affiliate Groups as staff of accredited programs and validators see other avenues for contributing to the profession. Support groups of directors working on self-study have been formed throughout the country, the benefits of which go far beyond participation in accreditation.

Another spin-off benefit of accreditation has been the development of new tools and resources, such as posters and books. Accreditation identifies areas where new training resources are needed. For example, experience with accreditation identified the need for NAEYC's position statements on developmentally appropriate practice and testing. These positions have far-reaching effects. In North Carolina, the Affiliate Group joined a coalition that successfully influenced the state legislature to prohibit standardized achievement testing in kindergarten through second grade. In Nebraska, the State Board of Education recently endorsed NAEYC's position on developmentally appropriate practice for schools to use in curriculum planning and evaluation. New NAEYC books such as *Healthy Young Children* and *Anti-Bias Curriculum* will be invaluable resources for centers seeking accreditation. Videotapes have been developed to depict the components of quality programs.

The Role of Accreditation in Advocacy Efforts

Accreditation has helped NAEYC crystalize its positions on the problems surrounding inadequate compensation of early childhood teachers. Accreditation helps us highlight the fact that competent, qualified staff are the core of a high quality program. Achieving the goals of accreditation—constructive adult-child interactions, developmentally appropriate practice, continuity for children—can occur only with the recruitment and retention of qualified staff who can stay in the program only if they are adequately compensated. Accreditation puts the early childhood profession in a better position to advocate for qualified, adequately compensated staff because we know they are essential to quality for children.

Accreditation has furthered our efforts in the public policy arena. NAEYC staff have been called on to brief members of Congress on the importance of standards and the impact of various indicators of quality on outcomes for children. When evaluating licensing standards, state officials use accreditation Criteria as a benchmark for comparison. South Carolina based their Quality Assurance Standards, used to make Title XX funding decisions, on accreditation Criteria.

"Achievements" cont. on p. 7

"Achievements" cont. from p. 6

Accreditation and Media Coverage

Accreditation has effected media coverage of child care. A few years ago, media coverage about child care was always negative and sensationalistic. Accreditation has provided a positive focus for the media. Accredited programs have been successful in obtaining local publicity for their achievements. Major national magazines, such as *Good Housekeeping* and *Sesame Street Parents' Guide*, inform the public about accreditation. During a 1-week period in April, two major news magazines—*Newsweek*, and *U.S. News and World Report*, cited NAEYC's positions on appropriate practice.

One final serendipitous effect of accreditation is that it has helped focus our energy and efforts on constructive things we can do for children. In the past, we were often frustrated over our lack of direction and vented our frustrations on each other. The field is pulling together more now, supporting each other's efforts.

All of these wonderful, constructive things are happening for children because NAEYC created some powerful tools. But the real success is attributed to you — NAEYC members— who used these tools in energetic, creative ways far beyond our dreams."

Did You Know?

Studies show that as many as half of all injuries in child care centers occur in outdoor play areas. The most frequent villains are climbers, slides, and swings. Most important, as many as three-quarters of the injuries were preventable. Adequate cushioning material under playground equipment can prevent many injuries.

Dear Academy:

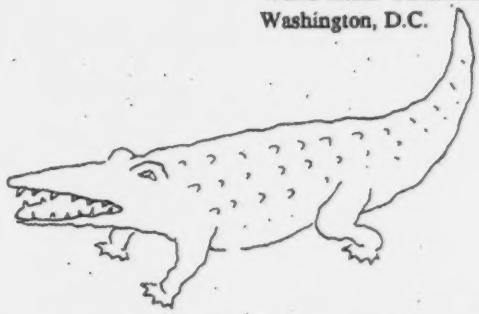
Recently we discovered that the building our child care center is housed in will be demolished. The World Bank, the organization that sponsors the center, committed itself to constructing a new center in another of its downtown Washington, D.C. buildings. However, there was a very specific zoning problem with the area of the building that was chosen for remodeling. No other space was suitable, and a time element was involved. Our old center would be torn down. Going through a lengthy processing of changing the zoning stipulations would not fit into time plans for the building process. However, if we could receive the endorsement of a local neighborhood association, the zoning change could be considerably shortened.

We quickly got on the agenda for the next neighborhood meeting to present our case. One endorsement we presented was a letter from Barbara Kamara, Executive Director of the District of Columbia Office of Early Childhood Development. She commended us for being "the first employer child development center in the District to be accredited by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs." The neighborhood board found this mark of quality impressive and saw value in its meaning. Their unanimous endorsement and approval were given that evening.

We now have a good chance of meeting the construction deadline. The District of Columbia Zoning Board looks favorably on endorsements from neighborhood commissions and can shorten the zoning change procedures considerably with this positive input. We have discovered that being an accredited program can have advantages not even realized. Recognition for accreditation is spreading!

Pearl Waxman, Director

World Bank Children's Center
Washington, D.C.



Step 2 in the Accreditation Process
Scheduling the Alligator Visit

In a center which was finishing the self-study, a director told the assistant director that the center was almost ready for the validation visit. A listening child's eyes got wide and he asked if "the alligator" would be coming to visit his classroom.

—Shared by Jeanne Thomas, Academy Mentor in California

"The self-study process was a real growing experience for us. The administrative section enabled us to turn vague policies and practices into clear recordkeeping. The classroom observation process brought the director and teachers into a closer relationship with open discussion about all phases of the classroom. Our self-esteem and pride have been elevated. Being accredited, we now have the courage and backing that we need to address our church for expanded financial support to raise teachers' salaries."

Dorothy McKenzie, Director
1st Presbyterian Weekday School
Gastonia, North Carolina

ACADEMY *Update*

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ACADEMY Update

Early childhood professionals collaborating for quality

Volume 4 Number 1 Fall 1989

Academy Update

Early childhood professionals collaborating for quality

Academy Update is published by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, a division of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. The Academy administers the only professionally sponsored, national, voluntary accreditation system for preschools, child care centers, and school-age child care programs. The Academy's purpose is to improve and recognize the quality of care and education provided for young children in early childhood programs. *Academy Update* supports this goal by providing early childhood professionals, including directors, validators, and commissioners, involved in accreditation with current information and feedback on the system.

Articles in *Academy Update* may be reprinted without permission. You must cite the following information with the reprinted material: "Reprinted from *Academy Update* (volume number and issue), a publication of the National Association for the Education of Young Children."

The Academy welcomes your comments. Address them to

National Academy of
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naeyc

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ABC—A Historic Victory for Children!

Comprehensive federal child care legislation that addresses quality and affordability is almost a reality! This major achievement on behalf of children and families is due largely to the efforts of thousands of NAEYC members. Congratulations to you, and thanks for your dedication and hard work.

What Does High Quality Child Care *Really* Cost?

The U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) recently released a report of their survey on the costs and services at high quality child care centers. The survey was commissioned by Senator Edward Kennedy to inform his proposed Smart Start legislation. Since the standards identified in the Kennedy bill are similar to NAEYC's accreditation Criteria, GAO surveyed 265 NAEYC accredited programs from which they received a 78% return rate. Completing the survey was very time consuming and involved many follow-up phone calls with GAO staff. The Academy staff wishes to thank the directors who generously gave their already limited time to complete the survey. The study provided invaluable information to help inform upcoming debates about the real cost of high quality child care.

In a preliminary report released in July 1989, GAO reported that the average annual cost per child in accredited programs for fiscal year 1988 was $4,070. However, after adjusting for in-kind contributions, GAO estimates the average cost per child as $4,660 per year. The cost varied by region of the country with the lowest in the west and the highest in the northeast.

The survey also examined teacher salaries. On an average, in fiscal year 1988 the annual salary for teachers at NAEYC accredited centers was about $13,700 compared with $27,400 for public school elementary teachers. Early childhood salaries were approximately half those paid to public elementary school teachers in each of the nation's four regions. The average salary for early childhood teachers with at least a bachelor's degree was about $14,530 whereas the estimated salary for public school teachers with 6.4 years of experience (the average for early childhood teachers in the survey) was about $21,500.

The "average" cost of child care in this country has widely been reported as $3,000 per child. The findings of this study clearly support the beliefs of most early childhood professionals that *high quality costs more*. When we consider that the cost of $4,660 per child is actually subsidized by teacher salaries that are only half

"Cost of care" cont. on p. 2

"Cost of care" cont. from p. 1

those paid to public school teachers, we realize that if teachers were more fairly compensated the full cost of high quality care would be considerably higher.

With burgeoning interest in early childhood programs and new funding becoming available for child care, the data supplied by this study become even more important. In the future, when policy makers, employers, or investors inquire about supporting child care, informed responses about the real costs of high quality care can be provided. NAEYC's Advisory Group on Quality, Compensation, and Affordability identified the need to educate our profession and the general public about the economics of child care as a major priority. During the next year, you will hear more about the "Full Cost of Quality" as NAEYC launches an educational campaign around this vital issue.

When Senator Kennedy called for a study of the costs of quality early childhood programs, the General Accounting Office did not need to begin by defining quality or by trying to measure the quality of a national sample of programs. Instead, they turned to the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs. It is gratifying that NAEYC's accreditation system has achieved that level of national recognition in so short a time. It is also gratifying that directors of accredited programs were willing to share vital information so that we can all become more well-informed and better advocates for children.

Requests for copies of the GAO report, should be sent to U.S. GAO, P.O. Box 6015, Gaithersburg, MD 20877. The first five copies are free. Additional copies are $2 each.

Staff Recruitment Ideas

The staffing shortage requires creative thinking of directors who must continually recruit staff members. If you know an innovative way of recruiting new staff that you can share, send it to the Academy. We will pass along your ideas in an upcoming issue of the *Academy Update*.

Accreditation: A Shaggy Dog Story

by Ellen Khokha

The Growing Place Child Development Center
Santa Monica, California

What excitement and nervousness charged through the staff on the day our validators arrived. We had all worked so hard to make the school shine. Parents had spent the previous weekend scrubbing and painting and each teacher had gone back through her plan books to find an especially enjoyable experience to do with the children, one that she knew from practice would "work." We also knew that it would not be an accurate picture of the program if everything was "perfect." In fact, we pride ourselves in giving the children opportunities to "mess up," because that is when the greatest learning occurs. We were not prepared, however, for the unexpected visitor in the 3-year-old room.

The teacher had requested that the children bring in something black and white. Jason had decided to bring his very large black and white dog. This would have been fine if Grandma, who brought Jason and the dog to school, had stayed to take the dog home. Unfortunately, she thought that it would be nice to have the dog visit all morning since Jason was so fond of it.

I first learned of this canine creature when Jason's teacher—with a stricken look—came into the office where I was working with the validators and handed me the dog. She commented that she didn't think it was safe for eager hands to be pawing an unfamiliar animal.

Having no luck in reaching anyone from the family, I tied the dog up to the VCR, which is on a movable cart, while smiling bravely at the validators. This would have worked except for the face that we had to use my office for a sensitive family conference about tuition. The minute the family sat down, the dog sensed that this father needed comfort and promptly snuggled up to the man while dragging the VCR cart behind. I tried to keep the dog at bay, but he insisted on being next to the father, and because the dog was so large, he ended up sitting on my foot. Imagine all of this going on while the validators were doing their observations!

When one of the teachers came into the office for her break, I immediately said, "Lois, you're here for the dog, aren't you?" After a puzzled moment, Lois got the hint and took the dog to the lower yard where he was well behaved until he was picked up.

The point to this story is that despite our best efforts to be "clean, perfect, and professional," we still came across as the real, problem-solving, and flexible program that we are. We're very proud to be accredited and urge any other program to consider the process. It is well worth the effort. Who knows, we might even invite a certain shaggy friend back.

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Publicizing the "List"

The Academy's list of accredited programs is dated information. Accreditation is valid for a period of 3 years and a program's accreditation status can change during that time. When the list is distributed in writing or a program's accreditation is noted by a Resource and Referral agency, it is wise to note the date until which accreditation is valid.

Region IV Head Start will Promote Program Accreditation

The Head Start Resource Center, Training and Technical Assistance Services, in Region IV, the eight states of the southeastern United States, has entered into a cooperative agreement with NAEYC to support Region IV Head Start programs in becoming accredited. This historic agreement will be signed at the NAEYC Conference in Atlanta. Head Start has traditionally led the way in establishing professional performance standards for early childhood programs. The involvement of Head Start programs in accreditation demonstrates their ongoing commitment to improving professional practice and enhancing the professional development of staff.

The Resource Center plans to establish a support network that will provide linkages between programs in the accreditation process with programs that have completed the process, information to all Head Start programs about the accreditation process, and overall assistance for programs working toward accreditation. This network will be launched in Atlanta, where approximately 25 individuals who are employed in Region IV Head Start programs will be trained as validators. Resource Center staff will be available to conduct workshops at conferences throughout the region.

For more information about this project, contact Connie Jo Smith, T/TAS, Room 344, Tate C. Page Hall, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, Kentucky 42101.

Overheard from a Parent

"I serve on the Board of an accredited preschool. The Board members are proud that the program is accredited, but whenever we make a suggestion about a change or an improvement, the director says 'We're accredited, so we don't need to change.' Being accredited does not mean the program is perfect. All programs should continue to grow and be responsive to parents' suggestions."

Week of the Young Child
New Theme Highlights Child Care

Make your plans now for the 1990 Week of the Young Child celebration—April 1 to 7. This year's celebration features a bright, new theme that will provide many opportunities to spotlight accredited programs: "Quality child care—Good beginnings never end." Use the celebration to recognize the many key factors that give children a good beginning, especially relationships with qualified, committed staff members and a developmentally appropriate curriculum. This year's theme is a beautiful illustration of an adult reading to four children huddled around her and on her lap. Materials to order from NAEYC include a poster, easel badges (to wear or prop on a desk), lapel pins, brochures, logo sheets, and balloons.

Matching Gift Program for Child Care in New Jersey

Mutual Benefit Life Insurance Company announced a pilot matching-gifts program that matches any employee's total eligible contributions up to $1,000 to not-for-profit child care centers licensed by the State of New Jersey. One of the first of its kind, this new matching program is an extension of the company's Matching Gifts Program to colleges and universities and public television and radio stations.

"We are pleased to be on the cutting edge of introducing an innovative way of leveraging increased giving to licensed child care centers," said Henry E. Kates, president of Mutual Benefit. "Our corporate commitment to improving the quality of education in the State of New Jersey begins with early childhood education and child care. When children receive a solid and enriching start in their education, they develop an interest and desire to achieve. The more we do to make that happen, our working parents will have an easier time in making child care choices. The result is reductions in employee stress and absenteeism and, ultimately, better prepared children to enter the work force of tomorrow," stated Kates.

It is hoped that other corporations that have a tradition of matching gifts to educational and charitable institutions will follow Mutual Benefit's lead in funding child care contributions. "We are running a campaign to announce this program to our employees," says Kates, "because the need for quality child care affects so many." For more information, contact Janet Lane, Robinson, Lake, Lerer & Montgomery, 212-484-7772.

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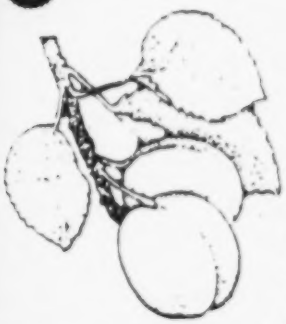
Accreditation Activities are Planned for the 1989 NAEYC Annual Conference



We hope to see you at the NAEYC Annual Conference, November 2 to 5, in Atlanta, Georgia. This year for the first time there will an accreditation track of sessions from which to choose in addition to the sessions offered by the Academy staff. All Academy meetings will be at the Westin Peachtree Plaza. Please check the *Annual Conference Final Program* for meeting rooms. Here are the highlights—

Open Hearing to Review the Criteria

The Academy Advisory Panel and staff will receive comments on proposed revisions to the accreditation Criteria during an open hearing on Friday, November 3, at 1:00 p.m. A draft of the proposed revisions appeared in the Spring-Summer 1989 issue of the *Academy Update* and in the September 1989 issue of *Young Children*. This session will take the place of the meeting of directors of accredited programs that is usually held at the annual conference. It will provide an opportunity for open comment on any issue related to accreditation.

For Validators

Previously trained validators should plan to attend a refresher validator training on Friday, November 3, from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. This is an opportunity to share your experiences with other validators and to refresh your memory about validation procedures.

Academy Mentors

A meeting of Academy mentors on Saturday, November 4, at 2:30 p.m., will provide an opportunity to share ideas and experiences with other mentors and Academy staff. The mentor program is a new service of the Academy that is still in its pilot stage. We hope to learn more from mentors on how to improve and expand this service.

For Directors

Academy staff will lead two sessions for directors. The first is a general information session on Friday, November 3, at 11:30 a.m., that will provide an overview of the process and its benefits. On Saturday, November 4, at 1:00 p.m., a how-to-do a self-study session will be held for directors who have applied for the self-study materials.

Be sure to check the Accreditation track listing in your Conference program for other sessions of interest including a session on the results of the GAO study (please see the story on page 1), sessions on how to support accreditation in local communities, and the use of accreditation in public schools as a way to bridge the gap between prekindergarten and kindergarten programs.

ACADEMY *Update*
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ACADEMY Update

Early childhood professionals collaborating for quality

Volume 4 Number 2 Winter 1990

Academy Update

Early childhood professionals collaborating for quality

Academy Update is published by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, a division of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. The Academy administers the only professionally sponsored, national, voluntary accreditation system for preschools, child care centers, and school-age child care programs. The Academy's purpose is to improve and recognize the quality of care and education provided for young children in early childhood programs. *Academy Update* supports this goal by providing early childhood professionals, including directors, validators, and commissioners, involved in accreditation with current information and feedback on the system.

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The Academy welcomes your comments. Address them to

National Academy of
Early Childhood Programs
1834 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20009
202-232-8777 800-424-2460

naeyc

New Corporate Funding to Improve Child Care and Support Accreditation

NAEYC is pleased to announce two major corporate initiatives designed to improve the quality of child care in communities in part by stimulating involvement in accreditation. The IBM Corporation and Johnson & Johnson each independently initiated a significant new effort to stimulate program improvement in child care in communities where they have employees. Recognition of the importance of high quality child care by major national companies such as these is welcome. We hope that their contributions will serve as a model for other companies and employers in the 1990s as parents and providers struggle to provide high quality care with limited resources (see the article, "Full Cost of Quality Must Be Paid," on page 5).

IBM to invest $22 million

In November 1989, IBM announced a $22 million initiative to establish the IBM Child Care Resource and Development Fund to help increase the supply of and provide technical assistance to child care providers in communities where IBM employees live and work. As part of this effort, $500,000 will be available over 5 years to provide scholarships to centers for accreditation fees and to provide small grants for program improvements needed to meet accreditation Criteria. The funds will be administered by Work/Family Directions, IBM's dependent care consultant in Watertown, MA. Funding will also be available for such projects as development and expansion of child care centers, development and enhancement of programs for school-age children, as well as programs for mildly ill children. To receive IBM funds, new child care centers developed under the initiatives must meet NAEYC accreditation standards.

"These announcements reflect IBM's continuing response to the changing social environment affecting IBM's employees," said IBM Chair John Akers. "The challenge to business is to provide employees the flexibility they need to pursue and advance their careers while minimizing the impact on their personal lives."

IBM's recognition and support for high quality child care and for the value of accreditation for ensuring their investment is gratifying. It is hoped this initiative will be emulated by other employers throughout the country.

Johnson & Johnson to pilot community child care project

The Johnson & Johnson Family of Companies Contributions Fund awarded a grant of $52,500 to NAEYC to pilot a model project to stimulate improvements in the quality of child care and education provided by selected centers in four commu-

"Corporate funding" cont. on p. 2

Visit the Soviet Union!

Early childhood educators and child development specialists, now is your chance to experience glasnost and perestroika first-hand. Dr. Nancy Lauter-Klatell of Wheelock College and the Organization for American-Soviet Exchanges are seeking participants for an exciting Early Childhood Conference Tour of the Soviet Union. This 2-week adventure, May 14 to 27, 1990, will include meetings with child care, school, and academic professionals in Moscow, Leningrad, and Pyatigorsk. Additional sightseeing trips are also part of the tour. The cost of $2,495 includes airfare, meals, and accommodations. For more information, contact Dr. Nancy Lauter-Klatell, 617-734-5200, ext. 168 or Cynthia Dickstein, OASES, 617- 864-7717.

Anti-Discrimination Policy Is Among Proposed Criteria Revisions

Among the proposed Criteria revisions listed in Fall 1989 issue of the *Academy Update* is the addition of NAEYC's anti-discrimination policy to criterion E-3.

At the July 1988 Governing Board meeting, the Board adopted the following Anti-discrimination Policy:

NAEYC's first commitment is to the rights and interests of children. In that regard, NAEYC believes that individuals in the early childhood field should be hired, employed, and if necessary, terminated based solely on their competence and qualifications to perform their designated duties, and not on the basis of their sex, race, national origin, religious beliefs, age, marital status, disability, or sexual orientation.

Timeline Is Set for Accreditation Criteria Revisions

As previously announced in the *Academy Update* and *Young Children*, the accreditation Criteria are undergoing review to determine what revisions or additions are needed to ensure that the accreditation system is current, accurate, and comprehensive. The proposed revisions were reviewed last fall and an open hearing was held during NAEYC's conference in November. The Academy Advisory Panel will meet in February to formulate final recommendations for NAEYC Governing Board consideration in April 1990. Once the Criteria revisions are approved, they will be announced in the *Academy Update* and a date will be announced by which they will take effect. Ordinarily, programs receive 1-year's notice of proposed changes in Criteria.

Validator Trainings Planned

Validator training will be held during several early childhood conferences this spring. If you were previously trained as a validator and feel the need to be retrained, you may attend one of these trainings. Qualified individuals who are interested in being trained as validators, should call or write the Academy for an application. All participants must register in advance. Following is a list of trainings to be held. Other trainings will be planned as needed.

March 28 & 29—SACUS, Dallas, Texas

March 29—Midwest AEYC, Kansas City, Missouri

April 26—New York AEYC, Binghampton, New York

May 3—New England AEYC, Burlington, Vermont

November 13 & 14—NAEYC, Washington, D.C.

"Corporate Funding" cont. from p. 1

nities where Johnson & Johnson has a presence. The communities have not yet been determined. The funds will pay accreditation fees and grants of up to $3,000 per center to make improvements identified as needed during self-study. The grants will be administered through an appropriate local agency identified by NAEYC in order to ensure that the accreditation validation/decision process is completely independent of the grant activity.

Johnson & Johnson requested that priority be given to centers that serve at-risk, low-income children, not centers that serve large numbers of J & J employees. This type of corporate giving reflects Johnson & Johnson executives' understanding of the importance of quality child care as an investment in the future, rather than simply viewing child care in the short-run as necessary to maintain a productive workforce. This will be a 1-year pilot project which will be evaluated to see whether and how it can be replicated in other communities in the future.

NAEYC congratulates the forward thinking of IBM and Johnson & Johnson and looks forward to working with them toward our shared goal of improving child care for America's children and families.

SACS and NAEYC To Pilot Joint Accreditation

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), one of the six regional accrediting associations, and NAEYC are investigating the feasibility of a joint accreditation process between the two organizations. SACS was the first regional accrediting body to accredit elementary schools and now has 6,542 member institutions in 11 states. Since many of their schools are expanding to serve 4-year-olds and because they have received numerous requests to accredit preschools and child care centers, SACS appointed a Task Force on Early Childhood Education to review how the agency can better serve children, parents, teachers, and administrators in early childhood programs. The Task Force members and SACS Executive Director for Elementary Schools, John M. Davis met with NAEYC's Marilyn Smith and Sue Bredekamp on several occasions to explore areas of mutual interest. Both organizations share the goal of improving school practices for young children, while also sharing the desire not to "reinvent the wheel."

Task Force Chair and President-Elect of SACS, Dr. Linda Coffey is Director of Early Childhood Education for the Broward County Schools in Florida. She and Dr. Millie Cowles attended validator training at NAEYC's Atlanta conference on behalf of SACS. SACS and NAEYC representatives have since compared standards for both systems, and feel they are sufficiently compatible to begin a pilot study with schools throughout the southern region. In addition, SACS refers small early childhood programs to the Academy for accreditation. They feel that their system, designed for elementary, secondary, and post-secondary institutions, is too cumbersome and inappropriate for individual, small child care centers or preschools.

While many specific details need to be negotiated before a joint accreditation is a reality, NAEYC and SACS leaders are very excited at the potential of such a collaboration for influencing schools for young children. Most SACS-accredited schools are public schools, while the majority of NAEYC-accredited programs are in the private sector. A collaborative effort of these two organizations could have a major impact. The Southern Association's region includes Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia.

Australia to Adopt NAEYC Accreditation

The Australian Early Childhood Association (NAEYC's counterpart in that country) recently voted unanimously to pursue development of a national accreditation system in Australia based on Academy Criteria and procedures. This action came after several years of study and field testing in three Australian states, New South Wales, Victoria, and Queensland. Many Australian early childhood educators have attended NAEYC conferences in recent years to learn more about our accreditation system and have followed its development. Academy Director, Sue Bredekamp, recently spent 2 weeks in Australia at the invitation of the Minister of New South Wales. During her visit, Sue conducted two validator trainings and met with the national Council at their annual meeting to share what NAEYC has learned about implementing national accreditation.

One of the most gratifying aspects of the Australian experience was that it provided independent validation of the Criteria and procedures. Early childhood professionals who attended the validator trainings in Sydney felt that the Criteria will apply to centers in Australia with only minor revisions. In their words, quality is quality and children's developmental needs are the same whether they live in Australia or the United States. One area where Australian criteria will be more stringent is staff qualifications since the minimal standards for staff training are much higher in their country. Among the required reading in most early childhood teacher education programs is NAEYC's *Developmentally Appropriate Practice*.

New NAEYC Resources for Infant/ Toddler Caregivers Are Now Available

Two new brochures are now available from NAEYC, *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Infants* (#547) and *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Toddlers* (#508). These brochures are reprints of the position statements describing appropriate and inappropriate practices for these age groups that appear in NAEYC's best-selling book, *Developmentally Appropriate Practice* (DAP for short).

As with all of NAEYC's brochures, single copies are 50¢ each; 100 copies are $10. Directors find these useful resources for parent education and staff training. NAEYC has received many requests for these brochures from members and we are happy to make them available.

Parent Questionnaire Translated to Hmong

Ann Dudley from Appleton, Wisconsin notified the Academy that she is translating the Parent Questionnaire, that is part of accreditation self-study materials, into the Hmong language for parents in their area. Ann said that other directors who serve Hmong families may contact her for the translated document. Write to Ann at Project Bridges Day Care & Preschool, Inc., 803 E. College Avenue, Appleton, WI 54911.

If anyone else has translated Academy materials into other languages and would be willing to share the work, please notify the Academy staff at NAEYC Headquarters. The Parent Questionnaire is available in Spanish from the Academy.

Code of Ethics Approved!

NAEYC is proud to announce the adoption of the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment. Representing almost 5 years of work and the very able guidance of Dr. Stephanie Feeney and Dr. Kenneth Kipnis of the University of Hawaii at Manoa and under the auspices of the Ethics Commission, the Code is a much-needed contribution to the field. The development of a Code of Ethical Conduct is one of several indicators of the increasing professionalism of early childhood education.

A copy of the Code appeared in the November 1989 issue of *Young Children* and will soon be available from NAEYC as a brochure. The Academy Advisory Panel will examine ways of incorporating the Code into the accreditation Criteria and procedures. Suggestions are welcome and should be sent to the Panel, care of the Academy at Headquarters.

Practitioners who work with young children face ethical dilemmas regularly. The Academy staff encourage all directors of accredited programs and those working toward accreditation to seek guidance in the Code of Ethical Conduct when trying to resolve the difficult situations that all too frequently arise in programs.

Help Solve the Staffing Crisis

Kay DeWeese, Director of Christ Presbyterian Church Day Nursery School, an accredited program in Carlsbad, California responded to our call for staff recruitment ideas by sharing two actions she has taken:

"I am very concerned about the staffing shortage. I serve on the Mira Costa College Community Advisory Board. I asked the Board to create firmer ties with the Career Counseling Department. We would like all students to have the opportunity to hear about careers with children. The Child Development Students' group is organizing and we hope this will create good peer counseling opportunities as students talk with their friends. Our school serves as a site for placement for high school child development students to do their intern assignments. I called the high school teacher and offered to be a guest speaker about opportunities in the field. Being a former high school teacher, I know how welcome a guest speaker would be."

Kay hopes to see other ideas for staff recruitment in future issues of the *Academy Update*. Please send your ideas to the Academy.

Order the NAEYC Action Kit on Quality, Compensation, and Affordability

This NAEYC action kit is designed to help you take effective action on these important, interrelated issues with early childhood staff, parents, media, and policymakers. The kit was developed by Barbara Willer, Director of NAEYC's Public Affairs Division and the QCA Advisory Panel. Order NAEYC #736. $10.

Full Cost of Quality Must Be Paid

NAEYC announces a new, large-scale public education campaign with the theme, "Don't Shortchange America's Future: The Full Cost of Quality Must be Paid." The campaign is designed to inform the public about the real cost of providing quality care for children to ensure that high quality services are provided to all our nation's children. "High quality" is defined as services that offer a developmentally appropriate program, are staffed by individuals with appropriate professional preparation who receive sufficient compensation, and provide group sizes and staff-child ratios that promote optimal development.

Improving early childhood professional practice

As the professional association for the early childhood field, NAEYC has strived throughout its 60-year history to improve early childhood professional practice and to improve public understanding and support for high quality programs. This campaign will continue that tradition, but its implementation will reflect an important difference from earlier efforts. This campaign is based on the premise that each of the variables above must be met *at the same time* and that if any are *not* met, the quality of services is compromised.

The problem

Currently the *price* of many early childhood services does not reflect their *cost*. The differential reflects the extent to which early childhood staff are subsidizing the program cost through acceptance of inadequate compensation. The National Child Care Staffing Study (Whitebook, Howes, & Phillips, reported in the November 1989 issue of *Young Children*; see also the "National Staffing Study" article on this page) provides grim and startling statistics about the degree to which staff are subsidizing the provision of services. The study found that the educational levels of child care staff far exceed those of the average worker. More than half of the assistant teachers and three-quarters of teachers have at least some college experience, compared to less than half of all women in the civilian labor force who have some college background. Yet the average child care staff member with some college experience

Inadequate wages lead to high rates of staff turnover and staff turnover hurts children.

receives an annual salary of $9,293, while the average female and average male with comparable education receive $19,369 and $29,251 respectively. The discrepancies are even greater for individuals with at least a bachelor's degree. Child care teachers with at least a bachelor's degree receive $11,603 annually on average, while the average female with at least a bachelor's degree receives $26,066 and the comparable male earns $42,422. Such figures dramatically display how little incentive is provided for staff in early childhood programs to pursue professional development.

Employment benefits provide an important component of the total compensation package. Benefits are also woefully inadequate for child care employees. The National Staffing Study found that only two-fifths of the sample reported having health insurance; only one-fifth reported that they had a retirement plan.

The link between staff wages and program quality

The Staffing Study provides systematic evidence as to the links between poor compensation for staff and lower program quality for children. Staff wages were the most important predictor of the quality of care among all of the adult work environment variables considered.

"Full Cost of Quality," cont. on p. 6

National Staffing Study Supports Value of Accreditation

The National Child Care Staffing Study, recently released by the Child Care Employee Project, is the most comprehensive and systematic examination to date of the child care staffing crisis and its negative impact on the quality of services for young children. The study's investigators, Marcy Whitebook, Carollee Howes, and Deborah Phillips report their findings in the November 1989 issue of *Young Children* and a brief summary of the results appears in the "Full Cost of Quality" article on this page. The study documents what program directors and teachers already know too well—inadequate compensation for staff leads to high rates of turnover which leads to inadequate care for children.

While the study's findings were in general discouraging, the results supported the benefits of accreditation. Fourteen of the 227 centers in each of the study sites were accredited. These centers had staff with more formal education, higher levels of early childhood training, and more experience than non-accredited centers. Accredited centers had more developmentally appropriate activity, more classroom staff, and better infant and toddler ratios. Teachers in accredited programs were more sensitive and engaged in more appropriate caregiving.

Accredited centers paid better wages and, with the exception of reduced fee child

"Staffing Study," cont. on p. 6

"Full Cost of Quality," cont. from p. 5

Inadequate wages lead to high rates of staff turnover and staff turnover hurts children. Program directors reported on average an annual turnover rate of 41%, but follow-up phone calls by the researchers 6 months after the initial interviews revealed a 37% turnover in that short time. When turnover rates are high, the Staffing Study found that children spent less time engaged in social activities with peers and more time in aimless wandering. They also scored less well on a measure of language development.

Efforts to find new resources

The intolerable condition of compensation for most early childhood staff is part of a larger vicious cycle. The basic problem is a lack of resources. Most early childhood programs depend on families to pay child care costs, but many families with young children are already strapped for financial resources. Public subsidies through federal and state government programs fall far short of need. Private charities and foundations pick up some slack, but the need is still overwhelming. The lack of resources makes it difficult for programs to raise their prices. Limited program resources lead to inadequate compensation for staff, since personnel costs are the largest percentage of the budget. Low wages and poor benefits make it difficult to attract and retain qualified staff. Staff who remain in the field have little incentive to seek additional training. The early childhood profession must share at least a part of the responsibility for this unending cycle by failing to adequately distinguish the price that families are paying for services from the actual cost of services when staff are reasonably compensated.

New resources are beginning to be seen

The recent passage of the federal welfare reform legislation requires that welfare participants seeking employment or job training be provided child care. Comprehensive federal child care legislation is close to reality. State early childhood initiatives have increased in recent years, as has the interest of business, industry, and private philanthropies in helping to address the needs of young children and their families (see the corporate funding article about IBM and Johnson & Johnson on page 1).

As interest and resources grow, NAEYC is committed to providing the leadership needed to assure that new investments in early childhood services promote high quality and provide a developmentally appropriate experience for children with adequate group sizes and child-staff ratios, offer reasonable compensation for staff, and promote professional development opportunities.

The plan

The Full Cost campaign will consist of two phases. Phase I will work to build consensus within the early childhood community on recommendations regarding the primary determinants of program cost. These include compensation and qualifications (both pre-service and in-service), and how these variables are jointly implemented in the form of staffing patterns. NAEYC criteria for group size and ratios will be reaffirmed. A second goal of Phase I will be to develop strategies and resources that can be used to implement the goals of the campaign. Resources are defined very broadly to encompass the materials (action kits, videos, brochures, booklets) as well as the processes that will be used by individuals and groups to effectively mobilize these efforts.

Phase II of the campaign will launch a full-scale public education effort to promote the implementation of the full cost concept. A critical component of Phase II will be to implement community planning groups with broad representation of business and industry, government, public schools, community early childhood programs, civic organizations, parents, and others. The groups' charge will be to develop state and community plans that effectively implement the full cost strategies, including assuring that public reimbursement rates for early childhood services reflect the true cost of program provision.

The campaign will include NAEYC recommendations for high quality service provision in five areas that most affect program costs: categories of early childhood professionals (revision of the current nomenclature statement), professional roles in early childhood programs, guidelines for in-service training, guidelines for compensation, and ratios and group size criteria. These recommendations are being developed with the exception of the latter which are part of the accreditation standards.

Look for more information on the Full Cost of Quality Campaign in future issues of the *Academy Update*. To be placed on a mailing list for this project, contact NAEYC's Public Affairs Department.

"Staffing Study," cont. from p. 5

care, provided more benefits. Accredited centers were also more likely to provide regular cost-of-living increases, paid preparation time, and written job descriptions. Staff in accredited centers reported higher levels of satisfaction with supervisor and director relations but lower levels of satisfaction with their ability to resolve their own work and family conflicts. Although accredited centers did not charge parents higher fees than non-accredited centers, they did serve children from higher-income families.

Among the recommendations emerging from the National Child Care Staffing Study were to implement national regulations based on NAEYC accreditation criteria and to encourage child care centers to participate in the accreditation system.

To obtain copies of the report contact Child Care Employee Project, 6536 Telegraph Avenue, A201, Oakland, CA 94609. 415-653-9889.

Attention Directors! Timelines for Validation!

Many programs seeking accreditation seem to follow a school calendar, beginning the self-study in September and seeking a validation visit in April or May. As a result, the spring is a very busy time for arranging visits. In your planning, remember these important scheduling points:

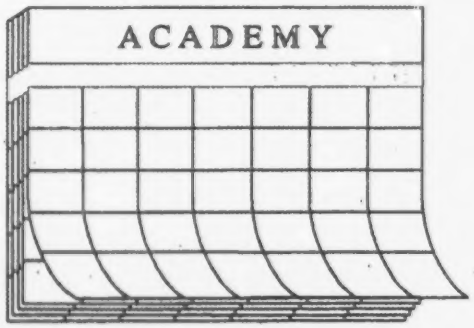
The Academy requires 30 working days (6 weeks) to set-up a visit. If you don't want your visit the last week of school, don't wait till the last minute to send in your Program Description.

Be very attentive when you identify available dates for the visit. Once the visit is set-up, if the director changes the date, it becomes very difficult to reschedule. A processing fee of $50 will be charged for visits that have to be rescheduled at the program's request.

Commissions meet every 8 weeks, with meetings scheduled in May and June to accommodate the busy season. Following Commission meetings, Academy staff must review decisions and prepare reports. Therefore, if you want to receive your decision before the school year ends, you should send your Program Description in no later than early March. Programs are notified of the Commission decision in writing following the meeting. Directors should *not* call the Academy to learn the decision.

To avoid the spring rush, directors may want to schedule the validation visit in the fall or winter.

What Are the Timelines to be Followed for *Reaccreditation*?



Accreditation is valid for 3 years from the date of the initial Commission meeting. At the second anniversary date, the program receives notice and instructions for pursuing reaccreditation. Accredited programs have 1 year, the last year of the 3 years, during which to complete the self-study/validation/decision process. Programs should request a validation visit no later than 90 days prior to expiration of accreditation to ensure that accreditation is continuous.

Extensions may be granted under special circumstances. Requests for extensions should be sent to the Academy in writing. Programs may request to delay their reaccreditation visit for a period of time not to exceed 9 months only if one of the following conditions exists:

- ✓ The program has an acting executive director or the director will be leaving during the time the visit is to be conducted.
- ✓ The program will relocate during the time the visit is to be conducted.
- ✓ An accident or natural disaster occurs to prevent or prohibit a reaccreditation visit.
- ✓ A merger is in process.

If the extension is granted, the anniversary date of reaccreditation remains the same to ensure that by delaying, programs do not obtain additional accreditation time.

All directors of accredited programs should take note of the expiration date of accreditation and anticipate when they should initiate the reaccreditation process. Programs may complete the reaccreditation process early. If they do, the accreditation expiration date remains the same.

Look... for an article on reaccreditation in the January 1990 *Young Children*. Moe Mulrooney, director of an accredited program in Vail, Colorado, did the study as an intern at NAEYC while she was a student at Bank Street College.

In her article, Moe discusses some of the differences between the accreditation and reaccreditation processes. One change that many directors reported is the increase in staff involvement and collaboration during reaccreditation. Directors also report that the accreditation Criteria are not just looked over once a year, but that accreditation standards have become a way of life for their programs.

Academy Welcomes New Staff

Staff change is inevitable in early childhood programs and the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs is certainly not immune to this phenomenon. In the last year we have experienced growth as well as staff change. The new year seems like a good time to introduce Academy staff to our *Academy Update* audience.

- **Elizabeth Ford** joins the staff as Assistant Director of the Academy as of January 1990. Elizabeth comes to us from Austin, Texas where she most recently served as Acting Executive Director of the Corporate Child Development Fund of Texas. Elizabeth has a long history with accreditation. She participated in the original field test of the system when she was a Head Start program director in Dallas. She served as a director of an accredited program for Child Care Dallas and she has been a validator on numerous occasions. Our staff met Elizabeth over the phone, the same way we meet most people, and many of you will soon come to know her that way as well.

- **Patty Briggs**, former Assistant Director of the Academy, left NAEYC in December to return to her home in Phoenix, Arizona with her son, Drew. Patty will be directing Success by Six in Phoenix, a collaborative early intervention project for at-risk children. Patty worked 5 years at NAEYC, since before there was an accreditation system, and her contributions to implementing the system cannot be measured. NAEYC members move around but they are never lost; they just get new responsibilities! Patty's relocation means that we have a new validator and commissioner from the western states.

- **Peggy Quinn**, a former preschool director, has been with the Academy since October 1987.

- **Val Creighton**, formerly director of Delaware State University's Laboratory School, celebrates her 1-year anniversary at NAEYC this winter.

Both Peggy and Val are well-known to validators and directors since they arrange validation visits, review validated Program Descriptions, and set-up validator trainings.

- **Stacey Strichlin** is also a familiar voice on the phone who provides general information, coordinates distribution of accreditation materials, and arranges validation visits. Stacey, who has been with the Academy since April 1989 is a recent graduate of Southern Illinois University, where as a student teacher, she worked in an accredited program.

- **Sue Bredekamp**, who has been with NAEYC since 1981, is still the Academy Director even though her current title is Director of Professional Development. In this role, Sue is responsible for NAEYC activity relevant to improving professional practice. Academy accreditation is the major effort toward this goal, but other activity includes standards for teacher education; NCATE folio review; and development of position statements on developmentally appropriate practice, standardized testing, and current projects on curriculum and assessment and violence in the lives of children.

You can reach the Academy staff by telephone during NAEYC office hours—Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (EST). Call 202-232-8777 or 800-424-2460. The FAX number is 202-328-1846.

ACADEMY *Update*

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A Division of the National Association for
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ACADEMY Update

Early childhood professionals collaborating for quality

Volume 5 Number 1 Fall 1990

PS 023954

Academy Update

Early childhood professionals collaborating for quality

Academy Update is published by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, a division of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. The Academy administers the only professionally sponsored, national, voluntary accreditation system for preschools, child care centers, and school-age child care programs. The Academy's purpose is to improve and recognize the quality of care and education provided for young children in early childhood programs. *Academy Update* supports this goal by providing early childhood professionals, including directors, validators, and commissioners, involved in accreditation with current information and feedback on the system.

Articles in *Academy Update* may be reprinted without permission. You must cite the following information with the reprinted material: "Reprinted from *Academy Update* (volume number and issue), a publication of the National Association for the Education of Young Children."

The Academy welcomes your comments. Address them to

National Academy of
Early Childhood Programs
1834 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20009
202-232-8777 800-424-2460

naeyc

Congress *Finally* Remembers the Children!

In the case of the 101st Congress, it's not the process, it's the product! For the first time in 20 years, comprehensive federal child care legislation was passed by the Congress and signed by the President. The agreement includes a new direct child care program that will give states money to provide families assistance with child care costs and to improve the quality and availability of services. In addition, this Congress authorized the largest increase in Head Start funding in history. Two major bills to improve children's television are other products of this amazing session.

This has truly been a banner year for early childhood legislation! Thank you to all of you who worked so long and tirelessly and never gave up hope. Please take a minute to write the President and your members of Congress to express your appreciation.

Criteria Revisions Approved; New Fee Structure Announced

Over the last 18 months, the Academy conducted a systematic review of the accreditation Criteria to ensure that they are accurate, current, inclusive, and effective in identifying high quality programs for young children. The process of review included soliciting suggestions for revisions through the *Academy Update* from directors, validators, commissioners, and Affiliate Group leaders, and from Advisory Panels and staff; publishing the draft revisions in *Young Children* for comment; holding an open hearing at the 1989 Conference; review of additional suggestions through the *Academy Update* (including a questionnaire on the possibility of changing staff-child ratios); review of the draft model day care standards being developed by the American Public Health Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics for possible inclusion in our Criteria; review of suggested criteria revisions on school-age child care received from Project Home Safe; and systematic review of all of the above information and responses by the Academy Advisory Panel in two separate meetings.

Many of you participated in this review process and we thank you for your thoughtful input. The proposed revisions were approved by NAEYC's Governing Board at their July 1990 meeting. All of the accreditation materials will be revised and the new materials will be available in spring 1991. For those programs applying for self-study in the spring,

Continued on page 2

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Higher Rates of Reimbursement Paid to Accredited Centers

The state of Minnesota has passed legislation allowing counties to pay a higher rate of reimbursement for subsidized child care to centers that are accredited through NAEYC and to family child care providers who earn a CDA Credential.

For more information, write Vicki Kunerth, Child Care Fund Administrator, Minnesota Department of Human Services, Human Services Building, 444 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155.

If you know of similar initiatives, please notify the Academy staff. Never assume that we already have this information. Sometimes we are the last to know. We would like to keep track of accreditation incentives so we can pass the information along to others.

New Fees for Accreditation

The accreditation system was originally intended to be self-supporting on fees paid by centers. Unfortunately, this goal has never been realized. During the first 5 years of operation, income has consistently covered only about 50% of expenses. During the 1989 fiscal year, accreditation income accounted for 6% of NAEYC's income, while accreditation expenses amounted to 12% of the Association's overall expenditures. NAEYC will continue to subsidize the accreditation system to some extent but as accreditation expands, it requires that more dollars be generated elsewhere.

Accreditation fees have not been increased since 1984, a period during which travel costs alone have almost doubled. In order to ensure the long-term health of the accreditation system, accreditation fees will be increased as follows, effective July 1, 1991.

Fees Effective July 1, 1991

	Application	Validation	TOTAL
Level 1 (Fewer than 60)	$100	$250	$350
Level 2 (61–120)	$150	$400	$550
Level 3 (121–240)	$200	$500	$700
Level 4 (241–360)	$250	$600	$850

For each additional 120 children, each fee increases $50.

CRITERIA REVISIONS

continued from page 1

the new materials will go into effect immediarely. Programs that already have self-study materials will be able to use those materials to complete the accreditation process until **September 1, 1992.** Any program that has the current self-study materials or purchases them before the revised materials are available will need to request a visit prior to September 1, 1992 if they wish to use those materials. If not, the program will need to reapply for self-study materials and pay the self-study application fee again.

Criteria changes

Some of the Criteria revisions reflect new information available to the early childhood profession since the early 1980s when the Criteria were originally developed. The areas where the Criteria are strengthened due to new information include social development of children, language and literacy development, anti-bias curriculum, school-age child care, code of ethics, and more specific health standards.

Most of the recommended Criteria revisions call for additional examples or indicators, rather than a substantive change in the criterion itself. In addition, many of the revisions are editorial in nature. For example, the Criteria have been edited so as to make it clear that they apply to public school kindergartens and pre-kindergartens, not just child care centers.

The response to the Staff-Child Ratio questionnaire in the *Update* was mixed. Approximately 50% of respondents called for no change in the criteria. The other 50% agreed that the Academy should set a threshold for staff-child ratios (above which we would never accredit a program), but there was no consensus about what that threshold should be. About ¼ of the respondents wanted us to effectively raise the standard (higher ratio of adults to children), while others wanted us to accept state licensing requirements. The Academy Advisory Panel reviewed these data in May and reconfirmed their decision not to change the ratios.

The results of this review were encouraging and indicated that the system is working effectively and that the time invested in the initial development of the Criteria paid off. Thank you again to all the directors, validators, commissioners, and Affiliate leaders who assisted with this important task.

The occasion of the Criteria review also provided an opportunity to review the finances and fee structure of the Academy. The decision was made to increase the fees, the first increase since 1984, in order to insure the future viability of the accreditation system. The new fee structure described on this page will apply to all programs and will be effective as of July 1, 1991.

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Mentors vs. Consultants: What to Expect

Helping centers overcome barriers to accreditation

Two years ago, the Academy piloted a project designed to assist program directors in negotiating the accreditation system—Academy mentors. From talking to directors throughout the country, we know that one of the major barriers to achieving accreditation is time. Many directors also indicate that the process itself is daunting. NAEYC wants to be sure that the system itself is not an impediment for good programs that should be accredited. To help programs negotiate the process, NAEYC instituted an informal program of identifying and training individuals who are able to disseminate accurate information about the accreditation process and facilitate groups of directors as they conduct a self-study and prepare for validation. NAEYC mentors are usually directors of accredited programs who are also validators. They agree to conduct four meetings a year. Mentors, like validators and commissioners, volunteer their time but their expenses are reimbursed by NAEYC.

The role of the mentor

By conducting orientation meetings, mentors help directors become familiar with the materials and process more quickly than if they work alone. By facilitating support groups, mentors provide directors an opportunity to interact with others in similar situations. Directors share strategies and motivate each other to complete the self-study and achieve its full benefits for their programs.

Academy mentors assist directors in negotiating the system, understanding the procedures, and correctly completing the paperwork. Academy mentors are not authorized by NAEYC to interpret the Criteria or provide consultation on program improvement. Only Academy staff are officially authorized to interpret the Criteria.

The role of the consultant

A program director may wish to employ the services of a consultant to help bring the program into compliance with accreditation Criteria or to train staff to implement appropriate interactions and curriculum. Sometimes, the individuals who are available as consultants also serve as validators and/or mentors for the Academy. In these situations, it is not surprising that roles can sometimes get confused. It is important for directors to understand that the Academy does not endorse these individuals as consultants. It is also important for directors and consultants to realize that any consultation arrangement and exchange of fees is a private negotiation between the program and the consultant that is not connected with NAEYC in any way. In addition, some Affiliate Groups, corporations, and private foundations are helping to support programs to achieve accreditation by providing additional financial support to mentors to enable them to give more of their time and/or to hiring consultants in some areas. In these situations, payment of the mentor/consultant's expenses and/or honoraria are private arrangements between the two parties.

Academy mentors assist directors in negotiating the system, understanding the procedures, and correctly completing the paperwork.

Endorsement policies regarding accreditation consultants

For the protection of all parties, programs and consultants should be aware of the following:

1. The Academy does not endorse and is not responsible for the training or technical assistance offered by consultants/organizations.
2. No consultant or training program can guarantee a positive accreditation decision.
3. Only Academy staff are authorized to officially represent NAEYC in interpreting the Criteria and procedures as established by the NAEYC Governing Board.

Use of disclaimers

To maintain the integrity of the accreditation system and to prevent misunderstandings, the Academy encourages consultants/training programs to use a disclaimer when providing training and technical assistance to programs in self-study. Here is a sample disclaimer:

"_____ is not connected with, or endorsed by, the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, a division of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Training and technical assistance provided by _____ cannot guarantee a positive accreditation decision."

Directors. . .If you want more information about the Academy mentor program, please write Stacey Stricklin at the Academy.

GSA Child Care Centers SHAPE-ing Up

Richard G. Austin, administrator of the U.S. General Services Administration, recently announced a new initiative to improve the quality of child care programs offered on-site at federal facilities throughout the United States. Approximately 70 child care programs are currently in operation in GSA-controlled space and more than 50 additional centers are planned. The initiative is called SHAPE and it addresses the five key elements for improving quality:

S = Salaries and benefits
H = Health and safety
A = Accreditation
P = Partnerships
E = Equity through scholarships

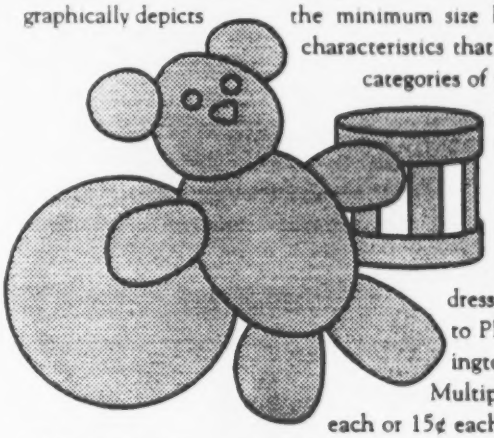
Centers in GSA space are encouraged to design strategies to make improvements in each of these areas. Accreditation is seen as the keystone upon which the remaining elements rest. The results of a recent survey indicate nearly all the centers are planning to seek accreditation if they have not already done so.

Allaire D. Williams, Director of the Office of Child Care and Development Programs said, "The NAEYC accreditation system represents an excellent model for improving practice, both through its self-evaluation process and the actual criteria. We encourage all of our centers to begin the process."

For more information on the GSA child care initiative, write U.S. General Services Administration, Office of Child Care and Development Programs, 18th and F Sts., N.W., Room 6119, Washington, DC 20405.

New Resource for Toy Safety

Every year more than 100,000 children require medical care because of toy-related injuries. Children's safety is among the primary concerns of teachers and directors in every early childhood program. Now a new free brochure/poster is available from the Association of Trial Lawyers of America and the Johns Hopkins Injury Prevention Center to help prevent such unnecessary injuries. Academy staff reviewed the brochure, called "Play It Safe!," and think that it is a valuable resource for administrators, teachers, and parents. The brochure opens into a poster that graphically depicts the minimum size limits for safe toy parts, specifies characteristics that make toys dangerous, and defines categories of toys with special problems. It even gives tips for yard sale shoppers to avoid dangerous bargains.



Single copies of "Play It Safe!" are available free as a public service from the Trial Lawyers of America. Individuals need to send a self-addressed stamped business-size envelope to Play It Safe!, P.O. Box 3717, Washington, DC to receive their free poster. Multiple copies can be ordered for 25¢ each or 15¢ each for orders over 1,000 (plus $4 for shipping/handling with orders over $15).

The brochure draws on the expertise of toy manufacturers, consumers, lawyers, physicians, and public health experts. It is an excellent resource, available just in time for the holiday shopping season.

Words to Ponder—

"Accreditation is the icing on the cake. But sometimes the cake isn't baked yet."

—A very experienced center director

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The Full Cost of Quality Must Be Paid! Children Are Worth It!

NAEYC proudly announces a new public education campaign to build support for obtaining necessary resources to ensure that the full cost of quality is paid in every program for every child. The goal of the campaign is to educate the public about quality early childhood programs, to build a broad understanding of what constitutes quality and how services are currently being subsidized by inadequate staff salaries. The full cost of quality means ensuring that all families with young children have access to early childhood services that offer a developmentally appropriate program, are staffed with individuals who have appropriate professional preparation and who receive sufficient compensation, and provide group sizes and staff-child ratios that promote optimal development.

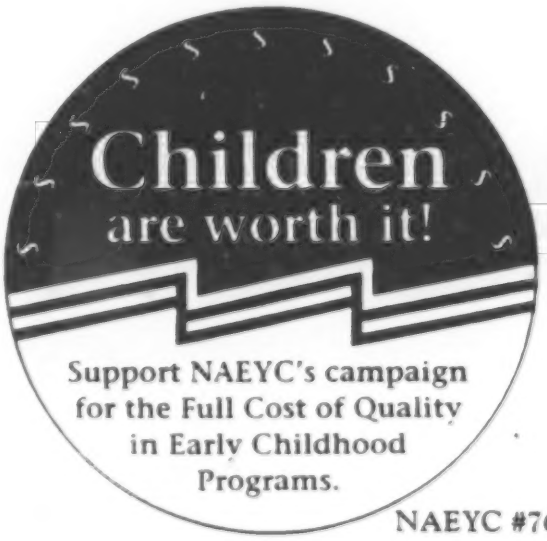
Improving salaries is essential

NAEYC accredited programs provide quality for children, but the findings of the GAO study (see the Fall 1989 issue of the *Academy Update*) pointed out that staff salaries in accredited programs are approximately half of public school teacher salaries. Even with this tremendous subsidy, the GAO study found that the average cost per child in accredited programs was $4,800, including $600 in-kind contributions. The study also found that parents' fees provide only about 70% of income. We know money for improved salaries is essential, but most parents cannot afford to pay more for child care. This means that additional resources must become available from other sources. High quality early childhood programs benefit all of society, not just families with young children. Therefore, all of society bears some responsibility to ensure that every child has access to high quality programs.

New Full Cost of Quality Resources from NAEYC

- ✓ ***Reaching the Full Cost of Quality in Early Childhood Programs***, edited by Barbara Willer. A handbook for programs and communities to use to calculate the full cost of quality and develop strategies to achieve it. #137 $6
- ✓ **The Full Cost of Quality: What You Should Know, What You Can Do.** A brochure to acquaint parents and community leaders with the concept of the full cost of quality in early childhood programs and to encourage them to take action. #537 50¢ each; 100 copies for $10
- ✓ **Full Cost Balloons.** These jumbo 14" red and blue balloons proclaim, "Children are worth it!" #768 25 balloons for $7
- ✓ **Full Cost Buttons.** These 3" round, red, white, and blue buttons show your support for the Full Cost of Quality campaign. #765 25 buttons for $12
- ✓ **Child's Buttons.** These small, but powerful 1¼" red and white buttons with a safety clasp say, "My early childhood program is worth it!" A must for every child in an accredited program! #766 25 buttons for $8

To order—please send a check or money order to NAEYC, 1834 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20009. Orders less than $20 must be prepaid (no shipping charges will be added). Orders of $20 or more may be billed (shipping charges will be added). Remember to specify the item number and quantity you desire.



NAEYC #765

NAEYC #766

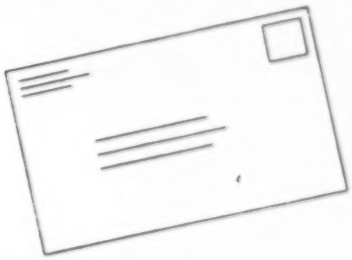
What We Gained From Accreditation

by Cindy Ellison

Co-Director, Treasury Learning Center, Claremore, Oklahoma

First, let me say how very much I appreciated the thought that went into developing the system. It was efficient and organized and the forms were well-designed.

Our program is only in its second year. It was important to us to do things "right from the start" and the self-study helped us so much with that! We developed many good forms and had to think and talk about our goals, philosophy, and curriculum. We would have done some of this on our own, but we got it all done this year because it was required for accreditation. I feel we have an excellent base from which to grow, which is firmly grounded in good practice and policy.



Accreditation became a very unifying goal for our staff and the parents in our program (we are a co-op). Because our parents would be viewed as staff, we talked and role-played a lot with them about the role of the teacher in the classroom. We devoted two parent meetings to the topics of discipline and guidance and the teacher's role. I ordered brochures and videos from NAEYC to use at these meetings.

As we went through the self-study, it was satisfying to find many areas that we already did well, but we also found some areas that needed more energy. For us, these were non-biased curriculum, outside play, and health issues. We read NAEYC books and other literature on these topics, attended workshops which were most informative, and then developed a plan for our program. It is exciting to learn new things and to figure out how to translate these to the 3- to 5-year-old level.

Finally, we are a church-based program and because the church knew we needed certain things before our validation visit, it took half the normal amount of time to get them done. The wheel can grind exceedingly slowly at times and using accreditation for clout made it go faster. Thanks for the experience. It was worth all the time and energy we put into it!

Some Thoughts from the Academy Director

Working for the Academy is almost always a positive, uplifting experience. It is exciting to communicate with directors and teachers who are committed to quality for children. It is inspiring to know early childhood professionals who are willing to volunteer their time to serve as validators, commissioners, and mentors. Sometimes we are amazed by the degree of dedication of so many people.

Very rarely, however, we experience disappointment. We are disappointed when validators refuse to validate certain types of programs because they assume from the program's name or sponsorship that it could not be high quality. Of course, we respect validators' honesty and it is vitally important that validators report any conflicts of interest or biases that could prevent an objective validation. But, on these very rare occasions when we are disappointed, we want to remind those individuals that children spend every day of their lives in "those kind of places." We should all be delighted that "those people" are striving to improve and that they have opened their centers to accreditation. We consider it a wonderful opportunity to improve the quality of life for the children. Even if the program does not achieve accreditation, we feel confident that some improvement will result from their participation in the self-study/validation process. When we hear that people do not respect the accreditation system because certain programs are involved, we want to remind them that accreditation was never intended to be an elitist system; accreditation was designed as a change system. It is predicated on the assumption that every program can stand a little improvement and some programs need a lot of improvement.

The goal of accreditation is to improve the quality of care and education for all young children in every group program. We can never reach that goal if we close our minds and our eyes to any program for any reason.

—*Sue Bredekamp*

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FYI

A Banner Year for Accreditation

Between January and June 1990, 646 validation visits were conducted!

Illinois Wants Accredited Child Care for Its Employees

A request for proposals to provide child care for state employees in Chicago, Illinois includes the requirement that the vendor "apply for and achieve accreditation from the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs (NAEYC) within 36 months after opening the facility."

Austin Supports Accreditation

The city of Austin recently gave a grant to the Austin Community College to encourage accreditation. The grant money pays 75% of accreditation fees. So far, 12 centers have received grants.

Maintaining a large, well-qualified pool of volunteer validators is one of the most important aspects of administering the accreditation system. To ensure the integrity of the validation process, all validators are encouraged to attend refresher trainings, and validators' performance during visits is evaluated by directors and Academy staff. In addition, a videotape, *Preparing for a Validation Visit*, is now sent to validators when they agree to do a visit.

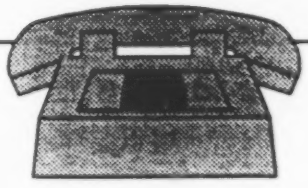
Any individual who attended validator training prior to 1988 and has not conducted a visit must be retrained if she or he wishes to remain a validator. Notices were sent to trained validators inviting them to attend future validator trainings.

The following trainings are tentatively planned in conjunction with state and regional conferences during the coming year. NAEYC will not pay travel to these conferences but will reimburse expenses for participants.

November 14—Washington, DC—NAEYC Conference
February 21—Chicago, IL—Chicago AEYC
February 28—Los Angeles, CA—California AEYC
March 13—Atlanta, GA—SACUS
March 21—Newport, RI—New England AEYC
April 17—Des Moines, IA—Midwest AEYC
May 2-5 (day to be decided)—Long Island, NY—New York AEYC

Academy seeks validators with special expertise

Due to increased participation in accreditation by diverse types of programs, validators are needed who have special expertise in the following areas: school-age child care, infants/toddlers, children with special needs, public school pre-kindergarten and kindergarten, hospital-affiliated programs, and large programs that use an open structure. If you are an expert in any of these areas and would like to serve the early childhood profession as a volunteer validator, please call or write the Academy.

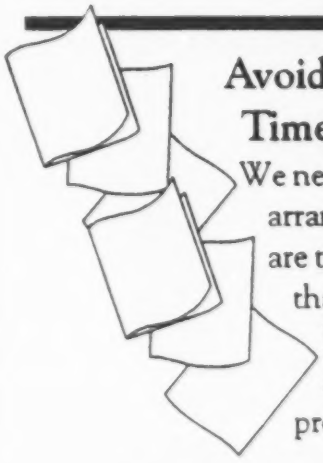


Keep in touch. . .

Now you can dial the Academy staff directly.

Call 202-328-2601

NAEYC's FAX number is 202-328-1846.



Avoid the Springtime Crunch—Timelines for Requesting a Visit

We need at least 30 working days (6 weeks) to arrange a validation visit, not because we are trying to be difficult, but because it takes that much time. During the months of March, April, and May, 75% of all visits are requested. We recommend that programs avoid the spring rush.

Activities Planned for 1990 NAEYC Conference

Again this year, NAEYC's Annual Conference will include an accreditation track of sessions that should meet the needs of directors at all levels of experience and knowledge of accreditation. The 1990 Conference is in Washington, D.C. Please check the *Final Program* for dates, times, and meeting rooms, but here are the sessions being offered by the Academy:

For directors

General information—Academy staff will offer a general information session for directors who want to learn the basics of accreditation on Friday, November 16, at 11:30 a.m.

How to do a self-study—An in-depth, how-to session for directors who already have self-study materials will be conducted twice on Thursday, November 15, from 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon, and from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. Directors who are actively engaged in self-study or preparing for a validation visit may obtain technical assistance from Academy staff.

Sharing session for directors of accredited programs—An opportunity for directors of accredited programs to meet together with Academy staff to learn about new corporate initiatives supporting accreditation, to share success stories, and to make suggestions will occur on Saturday, from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m.

For validators

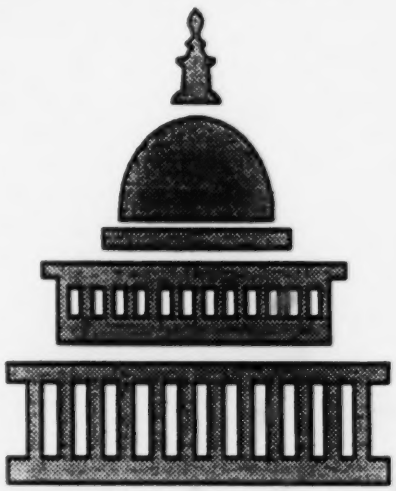
Validator refresher training will be held on Friday, November 16, from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. The first hour will be devoted to reviewing validation procedures and the second hour will be for experienced validators to discuss their questions and experiences with other validators and Academy staff.

Academy mentors

A meeting of Academy mentors on Saturday, November 17, at 2:30 p.m., will provide an opportunity to share ideas and experiences with other mentors and staff.

* * *

Be sure to check the Accreditation track in the *Final Program* for other sessions of interest.



Don't miss the Special Opening Event of the Conference, Thursday, November 15, 12 noon to 2 p.m. Join thousands of early childhood professionals on the west steps of the U.S. Capitol as we stand up for quality in early childhood programs!

ACADEMY *Update*

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ACADEMY Update

Early childhood professionals collaborating for quality

Volume 5 Number 2 Winter 1991

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Academy Update

Early childhood professionals collaborating for quality

Academy Update is published by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, a division of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. The Academy administers the only professionally sponsored, national, voluntary accreditation system for preschools, child care centers, and school-age child care programs. The Academy's purpose is to improve and recognize the quality of care and education provided for young children in early childhood programs. *Academy Update* supports this goal by providing early childhood professionals, including directors, validators, and commissioners, involved in accreditation with current information and feedback on the system.

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The Academy welcomes your comments. Address them to

National Academy of
Early Childhood Programs
1834 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20009
202-232-8777 800-424-2460

naeyc

Caring for Children in Time of War

An editorial by Sue Bredekamp

Since the outbreak of the war in the Persian Gulf, so much has been said and written about its impact on children that it seems somewhat repetitive to address the issue here. On the other hand, to remain silent would be remiss, if not negligent. But what to say that has not already been said? Perhaps it is most important to acknowledge that the people who read this newsletter are "on the front lines" when it comes to helping children cope with the effects of war. It is times like these that I appreciate more than ever the importance of developmentally appropriate practice in all programs for young children. Programs based on NAEYC's definition of developmental appropriateness are derived from what is age-appropriate for the children served and also what is individually appropriate. This concept is most relevant in the current world crisis. In deciding what to do about the war, teachers first have to think about their group of children.

Programs that are involved in our accreditation system serve children from birth through early adolescence in school-age child care. The appropriate response will vary enormously across this age-span. For children, preschool-age and younger, the most appropriate response is to ensure their safety and sense of security and trust. We do this in our programs in so many ways: by holding them, hugging them, maintaining our comfortable, familiar routines, playing with them, listening carefully to them, answering their questions in honest but simple ways, protecting them from the media barrage of war talk, monitoring our own behavior and what we say, supporting their play, and helping them learn how to resolve their own conflicts in constructive ways.

School-age children can grasp more abstract concepts and can begin to study the implications of the war in terms of geography, history, politics, technology, the environment. Children in the primary and intermediate grades can explore their own values about the politics of this war and take action, whether writing letters of opinion to the President or letters of support to the troops, or both. All age children need to be challenged to confront the biases that accompany a global conflict regardless of who the victims are.

So knowledge of child development and learning should guide us as we decide how

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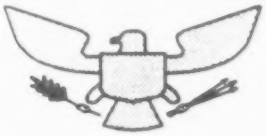
New Videos on National Policy

Two new videotapes, available from NAEYC this spring, will prove invaluable for advocates:

#870 *Early Childhood Legislation Enacted by the 101st Congress: An Overview* (15 minutes, $39) In clear, easily understood language, NAEYC's Public Affairs Director Barbara Willer describes the early childhood bills enacted last year and strategies for effective implementation.

#871 *Marian Wright Edelman's 1990 NAEYC Conference Address* (1 hour, $39) The nation's foremost advocate for children and founder of the Children's Defense Fund describes, as only she can, the achievements of the past Congress and the challenges facing our nation in the future. This address held thousands of people spellbound. Now you can hear it in your own program and community!



New Fees for Accreditation

The accreditation system was originally intended to be self-supporting on fees paid by centers. Unfortunately, this goal has never been realized. During the first 5 years of operation, income has consistently covered only about 50% of expenses. During the 1989 fiscal year, accreditation income accounted for 6% of NAEYC's income, while accreditation expenses amounted to 12% of the Association's overall expenditures. NAEYC will continue to subsidize the accreditation system to some extent, but as accreditation expands, it requires that more dollars be generated elsewhere.

Accreditation fees have not been increased since 1984, a period during which travel costs alone have almost doubled. To ensure the long-term health of the accreditation system, fees will be increased as noted below, effective July 1, 1991.

Revised accreditation materials will become available in July 1991. Materials purchased prior to July 1991 will be valid for accreditation until September 1992. To calculate fees due before July 1, subtract $50 from the appropriate amount indicated below.

Fees Effective July 1, 1991

	Application	Validation	TOTAL
Level 1 (Fewer than 60)	$100	$250	$350
Level 2 (61–120)	$150	$400	$550
Level 3 (121–240)	$200	$500	$700
Level 4 (241–360)	$250	$600	$850

For each additional 120 children, each fee increases $50.

WAR *continued from page 1*

to most appropriately respond to children's needs in time of war. But developmentally appropriate programs go beyond what is age-appropriate to be responsive to the needs of the individual children they serve. Some of the readers of this newsletter work in child care programs on military bases. The age-appropriate responses are necessary but not sufficient in these situations.

The job of providing quality care for these children is awesome, and made more so by the fact that most of the staff in these programs have family members in the Persian Gulf as well.

All of us are affected by world events, some more directly than others. But regardless of their political feelings, many adults are exhibiting signs of depression and helplessness themselves. We must take care of our own needs, but we also must remember the needs of children. I just read in *The Washington Post*, that children from 17,500 families have been left without a parent to care for them as a result of the military deployment. Without doubt, the most basic premise of healthy development is the importance of the parent-child relationship. Research could not be clearer about the need to prevent separating children from their parents. During the London blitz of World War II, the children who were sent away from their parents to the countryside for "protection" fared much less well than those who stayed in the target areas with their parents. Making children orphans is never developmentally appropriate; policies that exempt single parents and one parent of a military couple from combat duty are not only logical but essential.

My greatest wish is that by the time you receive this newsletter, this article will be less relevant because the fighting will be over. Even if that is true, the effects on children will be longer lasting. Our role in teaching them to find non-violent solutions to conflict and to develop positive self-esteem and concern for others has never been more important. The need to work against bias, whether directed at Arabs, Jews, or any group of people can no longer be a curriculum add-on—it may be the most important thing we do.

Working with young children is a demanding job under any circumstances. Accolades to all of you "on the front lines" caring for children!

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Support for Accreditation Growing

The more we hear about corporate, foundation, government, and private funds available to support accreditation, the more we believe that no program in the country should have to pay their own fees for accreditation. Here are some examples of such initiatives. If you know of others, please send them to us so we can pass them along through this newsletter.

Hartford Area Child Care Collaborative

Beginning next September, this project will focus on providing funds to programs that are engaged in self-study, grants for program improvements needed to achieve accreditation such as capital improvements, program needs, or substitutes, and training. The project will provide ongoing support to 10 to 15 programs. Its goal is to encourage more programs to participate in the accreditation system. Contact Judy Goldfarb, Hartford Area Child Care Collaborative, c/o Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, 85 Gillette Street, Hartford, CT 06105.

Binney & Smith/Lehigh and Northampton AEYC Accreditation Scholarships

Binney & Smith, Inc., the manufacturer of Crayola products, contributed $2500 for accreditation scholarships to the Lehigh and Northampton Association for the Education of Young Children, the local Affiliate Group in the area where Binney & Smith's headquarters is located in Pennsylvania. The scholarships are to reimburse the fees of any accredited program in Lehigh, Northampton, Carbon, and Monroe Counties of Pennsylvania. The reimbursement is available to accredited programs regardless of the center's profit or non-profit status. Eligible programs may contact Rebecca L. Gorton, 2120 Millcreek Road, Macungie, PA 18062.

Rochester, New York United Way

In Rochester, New York, the United Way awarded grants to Rochester AEYC and the Western New York Child Care Council for each organization to provide training and technical assistance to five early childhood programs for achieving accreditation. Eligible programs have already been selected and are limited to those receiving United Way funds. The grants pay accreditation fees, and may provide some money for equipment and training. The grant also paid for the training of mentors to assist programs. Pending evaluation of the success of the program this year, it could be expanded to more programs in the future.

Sunnyvale, California Child Care Task Force/DeAnza College

The Child Care Task Force of the city of Sunnyvale, California is funding an innovative initiative to improve quality in the city's 30 child care centers. The city recruited programs to participate in a special accreditation course offered through DeAnza College, paid the program's self-study fees, and will pay the validation visit fees upon accreditation. The 4-night/3-hour class is taught by Jeanne Thomas, an NAEYC mentor, validator, and commissioner. Eighteen people from 10 centers participated in the first class that is offered on a credit/no-credit basis. Upon completion of the class, individuals go into an ongoing support group. The class will be offered again in April and September. For information on funding, write Karen Skold, Sunnyvale City Manager's Office, P.O. Box 3707, Sunnyvale, CA 94088-3707. For information on the course, write Jeanne Thomas, Good Samaritan Hospital Child Care Center, 2425 Samaritan Drive, San Jose, CA 95124.

Arizona Self-Study Project

A cooperative venture of the Department of Health, Department of Education/Special Education, Southwest Human Development Corporation, Department of Economic Security, and Arizona State School for the Deaf and Blind, the Arizona Self-Study Project is an innovative project designed to improve the quality of public and private preschools and licensed child care centers throughout the state. The project began in 1987 because the sponsoring agencies felt that it was necessary to have an evaluation system for the programs that serve children with special needs. After reviewing existing assessment tools, they chose NAEYC's self-study materials.

Each year 30 programs are involved in the project. Any public school preschool, Head Start, or licensed child care center that has been in operation for 1 year and serves a minimum of two children who have been identified with special needs is eligible to participate for 2 years.

The project provides an orientation meeting, a second general meeting to further explain the process, an initial on-site visit by the project coordinator to observe and give recommendations, follow-up visits and technical assistance to strengthen the growth process, and monthly phone consultation. Through the project funds, programs receive initial fees for the self-study materials from NAEYC, travel and hotel costs for meetings, all the services provided by the coordinator, and technical assistance.

For more information, contact Arizona Dept. of Education, Special Education Section/Preschool Unit, 1535 W. Jefferson, Phoenix, AZ 85007, 602-542-3852 or Arizona Dept. of Health Services, Office of Maternal & Child Health, 1740 W. Adams, Phoenix, AZ 85007, 602-542-1880.

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Validators Are *Professional* Volunteers

Every year at the NAEYC Annual Conference, the Annual Business Meeting provides an opportunity for membership expression of opinion on issues relevant to current and future activity of the Association. Last year, one member expressed a strong opinion about the payment of validators. In her words, "It is time that the accreditation system ceased to operate on the backs of the validators!" Since some members of the audience applauded this statement and there was no time to reply, the Academy staff felt it important to clarify our policy and the rationale for using volunteer validators and commissioners.

Validators: On behalf of children, we thank you!

The idea of paying validators was seriously debated during the development of the accreditation system. Our desire to ensure professional treatment of validators was weighed carefully against our need to design a system that could be self-supporting on fees paid by child care centers and preschools. No large government grants were sought to sustain the accreditation system. We did not want this system to be built on soft money, leaving it vulnerable to political whims.

The main reason we decided to use volunteers was that any honoraria paid to validators or commissioners would have to be added to the fees paid by programs. Since most programs operate on very tight budgets and many say that fees are the major barrier to seeking accreditation, we felt that a priority should be to keep the system affordable. We also knew that any increase in fees would most likely come out of the limited funds available for staff salaries which are already inadequate.

Another rationale for using volunteer validators came from our study of other accrediting bodies. Virtually every accrediting system in the nation, including those that serve other underpaid services such as nursing and camping, do not pay honoraria to on-site visitors. The rationale is that serving as a validator is a professional contribution for which the individual also reaps benefits in terms of professional development opportunities and recognition. Most validators also work in accredited programs and they view visits to other programs as learning opportunities. When programs grant release time to validators to conduct visits, they also support the profession.

Because we do not pay validators, we do not ask for significant amounts of their time. Validators are asked to agree to do at least three visits annually, with most visits lasting 1 or 2 days. Some validators have more available time and are willing to do many more visits. We very much appreciate this contribution of their valuable time and expertise, and we certainly do not intentionally exploit people.

We assume that when an individual agrees to be a validator, she or he is willingly volunteering their time. Validators who are unable or unwilling to do so should ask that their names be removed from our database. It is true that child care is subsidized by the low pay of staff members and justifiably has been accused of operating "on the backs" of child care workers. But the analogy does not hold for a professional accreditation system. "Professional" has many meanings; being paid for work is only one definition. Validators demonstrate the highest level of professional integrity and commitment—a willingness to apply professional knowledge to improving professional practice.

Accredited Programs— Remember to Reapply *Before* Expiration

Accreditation is valid for 3 years. Approximately 1 year before accreditation expires (the second anniversary of accreditation), the Academy notifies directors so that they have ample time to complete a self-study and request a validation visit before expiration. We suggest that the visit be requested approximately 90 days prior to the expiration date to ensure continuous accreditation status. (This year we notified programs earlier, about 16 months before expiration, due to the fee increase in July 1991).

The year's notice is appreciated by many people, but sometimes a new director joins the staff during that last year and is not informed of the programs's accreditation status. The expiration date is noted on the certificate of accreditation. If you are unsure about your program's status, please check your certificate. It should be posted in your program.

If reaccreditation is not accomplished prior to expiration, we *cannot* grant an extension to directors who let the deadline for reaccreditation pass. The program can, however, still go ahead and become reaccredited. The result will be that our records will show a period of non-continuous accreditation.

Remember your program's reaccreditation deadline!

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Mentors Available

The Academy has established a network of mentors throughout the country who are knowledgeable about accreditation and willing to share their expertise. Mentors are usually directors of accredited programs who are also validators. They agree to conduct up to four meetings a year to provide general information about accreditation or to facilitate a support group for directors' learning to negotiate the system. They do not provide consultation on program improvement, except by personal arrangement and not under the auspices of the Academy.

If your program would like more information about possible mentor activity in your area, please write to Stacey Stricklin at NAEYC Headquarters, 1834 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20009.

Requesting a Validation Visit: Do's and Don't's

This time of the year, we receive many calls about how to request a validation visit. It's simple. Once you have completed your self-study and made all the improvements you can, complete the Program Description by indicating your program's current state of compliance with the Criteria—not where you started and not where you would like to be in the future, but where you are *right now*. Be sure to fill in the numbers indicating the responses to the Staff and Parent Questionnaires on Part 3 of the Program Description. (This seems to be the most frequent oversight, probably because it looks like the far right column is for validators only.)

Send the completed Program Description, the Classroom Observation Summary Sheet, and your check for the validation fee made out to NAEYC. (See the fee structure on page 2 of this newsletter. Please note that fees sent before July 1 are $50 less than those indicated on the chart.) This is all you need to send us. You will need to keep the original Staff and Parent Questionnaires on-site for the validators to see. The Observation books and the Administrator Report used in the self-study are your workbooks and do not need to be examined by us. Feel free to write in them as much as you like during the self-study.

You must allow us at least 6 weeks (30 working days) to arrange the visit. Remember that sometimes we do not receive your materials until a week or more after you mail them. The 6-week time requirement is necessary because it takes that long for us to arrange your visit. Please don't call us and ask for special treatment ("I have to have my visit next Wednesday.") because you are an Affiliate officer or validator. If we were to put your program ahead of others that have been waiting, it would be very unfair to them.

Help for Validators: How to Validate Administrative Criteria

One of the most common validator errors occurs in validating the administrative items for which questionnaire data are presented as evidence in support of the director's rating. The procedures require that the validator compare the questionnaire data to the director's rating. In cases where the information is consistent, the criterion is validated; if the information is not consistent, the criterion is not validated so that the validator will remember to interview the director to obtain additional information about the situation. Sometimes, the data are confusing and a validator may have difficulty deciding if the data are consistent. For these situations, the Academy provides decision rules—to validate a director's rating of "3," 75% of the staff must rate the item a 3 and/or 75% of the parents who returned the questionnaire must answer the item, "yes." These rules are provided for the validator to make a validation decision about which she or he must then interview the director.

Clarify inconsistencies with the director

Often we receive validated Program Descriptions in which the only thing the validator has written in the comments section next to one of these items is, "75% of the staff did not rate a 3." Unfortunately, commissioners do not find this type of comment helpful. They can see for themselves the percentage of staff or parent response. Instead, the validator should ask the director for more information or an explanation of the inconsistency. Any non-validated item such as these should elicit a clearly stated comment from the director. There may be a very simple explanation such as, "Four staff members are new and have not had annual evaluations yet" or "I don't know why they said we don't have written personnel policies; here's a copy of their contract which they signed indicating that they have read and understood the policies." A comment from the director is essential for the commissioners to interpret why the discrepancy in perceptions occurred.

This is only one example of how the validators serve as the "eyes and ears" of the Commission. Some things about the program are clearly discernable from reading the Program Description such as the actual responses on the questionnaires. But other things need more information and the presence of the validator on-site is our opportunity to get that information.

Any time a validator has a question about procedures, before, during, or after a visit, call the Academy staff for answers. Call us toll-free at 800-424-2460 or directly at 202-328-2601.

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Academy Complaint Policies

One of the vehicles for maintaining the integrity of the accreditation system is responding to complaints. Fortunately, we do not receive many complaints relative to the number of accredited programs. But, it is important that directors of accredited programs, other early childhood professionals, and consumers understand the Academy's procedures for handling complaints.

For the Academy to take action, a complaint must be received in writing, must be signed and include contact information for the complainant, must be about an accredited program (not one that is in the process of self-study), must relate to a current situation rather than one in the past, and must provide specific documentation relevant to substantiating non-compliance with a criterion for accreditation. In short, the burden of proof for substantiating non-compliance is on the complainant, not on the program. If so requested, the identity of the complainant will be kept confidential unless revealing the identity is essential to describing the complaint.

The Academy will only take action on a complaint after all local avenues for addressing the complaint have been exhausted. For instance, we would not respond to a parent's concern if the parent did not provide evidence that she or he had talked with the teacher, director, and/or governing board of the program *first*.

In addition, the Academy will not become involved in personnel manners unless the situation relates specifically to a criterion and all avenues for exercising grievances have been exhausted.

If the complaint is found to meet all of the above considerations, the program director is notified of the complaint and asked to respond in writing. The Academy reserves the right to require that a program submit to a site visit as a result of information obtained through a complaint.

Wanted: Well-Qualified Staff for Quality Programs

Marsha Poster, director of Carnegie Mellon Child Care Center in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, an accredited program, shared the following letter and ad with our staff.

"The frustration of finding competent well-trained staff is an issue that plagues all of us across the nation. I wanted to share this ad as an example of support for all the wonderful things you do to raise the level of professionalism and understanding to help us do the best for young children. In terms of salary levels, I hope someday they can be advertised as they should be—reflecting a wage that is commensurate with what we expect training to support and produce."

From the *Pittsburgh Press*, Dec. 2, 1990

TEACHER—Early Childhood Teacher needed immediately for accredited program, from 10:00–6:00, Monday–Friday. Minimum requirements: College degree, teaching certificate, at least 2 years experience working in a group setting with toddlers and membership in NAEYC (or willingness to join). Salary: $15,000–20,000 plus excellent benefits. Send cover letter containing examples of developmentally appropriate programming you have implemented and a résumé.

Validating Overseas—

Are you interested?

More and more programs that are located outside the United States are seeking Academy accreditation. Most of these programs are child care centers on U.S. military installations in Europe or the Far East. NAEYC's agreement with these programs is that they may seek accreditation, but they are required to pay the actual costs of a validation visit (rather than the validation fee) and of course, their participation is contingent on our ability to find qualified validators who do not have a conflict of interest, and who are willing and available to travel to these locations.

The Academy is seeking highly experienced, outstanding validators who are willing to volunteer and available to validate these programs. To defray costs, most trips would potentially require validating several programs, thus requiring stays of at least 1 week. Individuals must have a current passport.

If you would be willing to validate overseas, please contact Stacey Stricklin at NAEYC Headquarters. We can't promise that we will use you, but it will be helpful to us to have a pool of interested people from which to draw.

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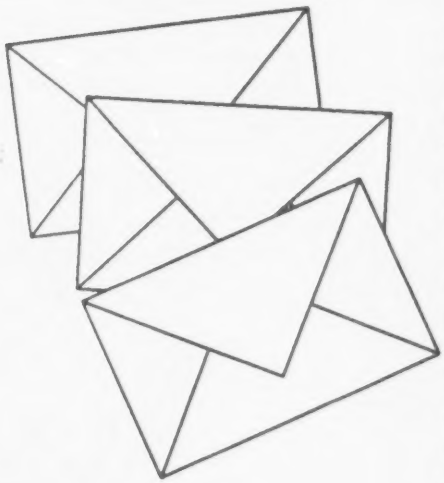
From our Readers. . .

One of the main purposes of *The Academy Update* is to promote the exchange of information about accreditation. This page offers just a sample of our correspondence.



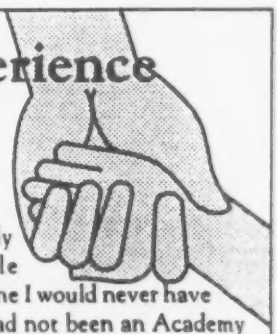
Dear Academy Staff:

Thank you for *The Academy Update*. I enjoyed reading the latest issue. Your thoughts on the fact that some validators prefer not to validate "certain types" of programs were thought provoking. I reflected back to my first validation visit and each one in the order that I visited. There have been small centers, private, public, poor, multi-site organizations, and yes, a large center. Each was important! I have flown to a large city and driven 30 miles over the beautiful mountains in North Carolina to get to a two-room center. There was something for me to learn at every site! In turn, they probably learned something from me, even if it was *"don't be afraid of validators."*

Quality does not have one name brand, but quality always speaks loud and clear. You can see it everywhere, feel it, "Oh, what an atmosphere!," smell it, hear it, and even taste it when it's present in a program for children. Now, with Academy Criteria you can document it on paper for all to know. Thank you for all I learned from these small, perhaps, not so popular, quality centers.

Cheryl Sandidge
Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital
Albany, Georgia

One Validator's Unforgettable Experience



I agreed to a "validating job" in a community center preschool program in Burlington. So began one of the richest personal and professional experiences of my adult life.

The program was a large one and as I climbed the steps leading into the building I found myself a bit overwhelmed by the physical facility. But that feeling could not and did not survive the warmth and color and "child-ness" of the preschool rooms. I was at home! The children's work on the shelves and walls, the lovingly arranged interest areas, the sounds of the children and adults involved in what they were doing all put me at ease.

As I fulfilled my validating tasks that first day I became more and more comfortable. But it was during my second day that the incident happened that had such meaning for me. I was observing a group of preschoolers. Unexpectedly, a child asked me, "What's that in your ears?" Before long, I was surrounded by eager, curious young ones watching me remove my hearing aids, examining them (oh, so carefully and gently!), asking me if it hurt me to wear them, and many other questions. I explained that I wore the aids to help me hear since I am hearing impaired, and no, it does not hurt to wear them, and so on. As I responded I noticed how relaxed, even interested, the teacher was. Surely her schedule was being skewed. The teacher was and is a true "early childhood person"—so comfortable with letting the children take their time experiencing and learning. She put me and the children at ease. It was a wonderful, truly memorable moment, one I would never have lived if I had not been an Academy validator. Validated for me was the conviction that there is so much real learning taking place in our programs here in Vermont, that there are staff members who know young children and who are fully prepared to act upon that knowledge. People in our programs understand how children develop and learn and are indeed practicing the very best in early childhood education.

Elly Dinnerstein
Montpelier, Vermont

Introducing the Academy Staff

The Academy is a dynamic organization. Similar to any early childhood program, we experience staff turnover as well as staff growth. Recently, our numbers have grown to seven full-time staff members. Since our clients usually meet us over the phone, here's a little more information about us.

Sue Bredekamp is still the Director of the Academy, but her job title now is Director of Professional Development. This title reflects the fact that her work for NAEYC goes beyond accreditation to include oversight of the association's activity relevant to professional development, including establishing guidelines for teacher education and developing position statements designed to improve practice in programs for children. The truth is that Sue's major contribution to accreditation is having the memories.

Saundra Gilbert is the new Assistant Director of the Academy. She joined the staff in January 1991. Saundra is not new to the field, having 39 years of experience (she started very young), nor is she new to NAEYC, having served as President of the Washington, D.C. Affiliate Group. Saundra previously worked for the District of Columbia Recreation Department as a supervisor of child care and Head Start and coordinator of Parent Education. Saundra replaces Elizabeth Ford, who is fortunately still with NAEYC in another position.

Peggy Quinn is an Accreditation Coordinator. Peggy has been with the Academy for more than 3 years and is well-known to most validators. Her background is in early childhood and special education. She was formerly a director of a nursery school for 20 years.

Stacey Stricklin is an Accreditation Coordinator. Stacey has been with the Academy about 2 years. She came to us from Illinois where she graduated from Southern Illinois University, majoring in Early Childhood Education. Stacey is the contact person for the Academy's special projects.

Machelle Wilson is an Accreditation Assistant. Machelle has been with us almost a year. She came to NAEYC after graduating with a major in Early Childhood Education from Texas Tech University.

Kim McClennahan is the newest member of our staff joining us in January as an Accreditation Assistant. Kim benefited from two excellent early childhood education programs—the University of Oklahoma and the University of Maryland.

Roy Ignacio is an Accreditation Assistant who has also been with us about a year. Roy's background is in business administration, but he has been well educated in many ways by working in an office full of women. Sometimes, he feels like he works in a sorority house.

This is our staff. We are here to serve you and to make sure that your accreditation experience is as valuable as possible. Please call us directly if you have concerns or complaints (202-328-2601) or 202-232-877 or 800-424-2460 (switchboard numbers). We also appreciate hearing from you when your experience is rewarding!

ACADEMY *Update*

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AT&T Funds for Accreditation

Beginning July 1, AT&T will launch a major new project to improve the quality of child care through accreditation and help educate parents about quality at the same time. AT&T has designated $200,000 over the next 2 years to be used for accreditation fees by any program that serves at least one AT&T employee. The grants will be initiated through the parents who will receive a specially designed brochure describing what accreditation is all about and how we define quality. AT&T's concept is to encourage the grass-roots involvement of parents in programs, and also to educate parents about what to look for in selecting a program. The brochure will inform parents about what accreditation requires, and if they think their child's program qualifies, parents can access the funds on behalf of the program. The unique aspect of this initiative is that eligibility for accreditation scholarships is determined by serving only one AT&T family. This way the funds ensure support for programs in more sparsely populated areas of the country or where there are limited numbers of AT&T employees.

This new project is an extension of the Family Care Development Fund that was established in 1989 to increase the supply and improve the quality of child care and elder care resources in communities throughout the country where AT&T employees live and work. The Fund was part of a comprehensive package of family supportive benefits resulting from a groundbreaking labor contract between AT&T, the Communication Workers of America, and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. The Fund will allocate $10 million over a 3-year period which began January 1990 and continues through 1992.

During its first year, the Fund awarded over $1.5 million to 74 child care projects in 21 states. Most of the grants were in the range of $20,000 to $35,000. Among the child care projects funded were center expansions, before- and after-school programs, staff training and quality improvement projects for centers, and family child care organizations. Priority for program improvement grants is given to programs that serve the largest number of AT&T employees and that result in benefits for AT&T employees. Both for-profit and not-for-profit programs are eligible. Priority is given to programs that are accredited by NAEYC or programs that present a plan for obtaining accreditation.

Accreditation scholarships will be widely available since programs will be eligible by serving at least one AT&T family.

continued on page 2

continued from page 1

Together the two AT&T efforts have tremendous potential for improving the quality of early childhood programs in communities throughout the nation. Since the eligibility requirement is to serve at least one AT&T family, accreditation scholarships will be widely available. Then those programs that serve more AT&T employees can use the self-study process to identify areas in need of improvement and apply to the Fund for a grant to make those improvements. With grant amounts of more than $20,000, real improvement can result.

AT&T 's efforts have tremendous potential for improving the quality of early childhood programs in communities throughout the nation.

Types of quality improvement projects AT&T will fund are those that improve the overall quality by supporting child care centers seeking NAEYC accreditation; improve the knowledge and professionalism of the caregiver including training programs, access to education materials, and support for participation in professional development conferences and other activities; provide equipment and materials to enhance the quality of direct delivery of child care such as books, art supplies, learning toys; and develop high quality curriculum for all phases of child care including school-age.

For information about either of these initiatives, contact AT&T, Family Care Development Fund, 1 Speedwell Avenue, Room 88W-4160, Morristown, NJ 07962-1954 or call 201-898-2255.

Responses to 20/20's "Wild about Learning"

Dear ABC News, *20/20*:

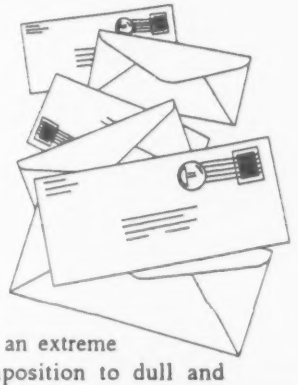
Congratulations on selecting the timely and significant topic of preschool education. Increasing public awareness about what makes a quality early childhood program is of utmost importance. However, the episodes your reporter selected to show developmentally appropriate preschool education seriously distorted Bev Bos' program as well as recommendations of the early childhood profession. Although child-initiated play is the major vehicle for promoting social emotional growth and developing intelligence in young children, throwing paint and playing in your underwear are not considered playful practices in many fine schools even in California. I am especially offended that you selected a middle-class Anglo school to depict "good" practices and a primarily Black school to show negatives. Wake up, *20-20*. That is inaccurate and insensitive reporting. I am an active member of the California Association for the Education of Young Children and the California Kindergarten Association.

Thank you,

Doris O. Smith
Fresno, California

Dear *20/20*:

Was your recent segment on "letting children be children" an example of media irresponsibility? NAEYC's Sue Bredekamp was articulate in defense of developmentally appropriate philosophy and programs for young children and Bev Bos' words were usually on target. But the footage of the children hurling paint at each other, jumping on the house corner bed, and doffing their clothes far exceeded the boundaries of joyful self-expression and healthy, noisy freedom and celebrated instead, chaotic disregard for appropriate practice. I am sorry that



such an extreme juxtaposition to dull and mindless rules and to pushing too-early reading drill and foreign language study was made. As a teacher and director in one of the many reasonable, stimulating, play-oriented, experience-based programs in the field of early childhood education, I cringed.

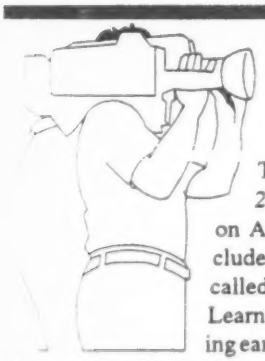
Kathy Delsanter
President, Dallas AEYC and Director, Northaven Cooperative Preschool and Kindergarten (NAEYC accredited)

Dear Sue Bredekamp:

Congratulations on bringing NAEYC and the importance of its work to *20/20*. As an educator, I am concerned that there are those who might misinterpret the message of the broadcast and quickly label those of us who know that seatwork is no way to educate young children as "crazies." TV has a way of emphasizing such things as children taking off their clothes and slinging paint and de-emphasizing the common sense of "letting kids be kids." However, I'm thrilled that commercial TV has shown interest and that some awareness of the problem reached thousands of American households.

Parent
New York State

20/20 Hindsight



ABC Television's *20/20* show on April 19th included a segment called "Wild about Learning," profiling early childhood educator, Bev Bos and her preschool in California. The title accurately portrays the extreme way in which play as learning was depicted in the program. Because the segment included edited portions of an interview with NAEYC's Sue Bredekamp, some people mistakenly concluded that the program clearly depicted developmentally appropriate practice and that NAEYC endorses Bev Bos. Although Bev Bos is a well-known author and presenter at many AEYC conferences, as with all presenters and exhibitors, her involvement does not imply endorsement by NAEYC. In addition, the programs depicted on *20/20*, including Bev's program, are **not** accredited by NAEYC.

Sue agreed to be interviewed to describe what NAEYC believes is developmentally appropriate and to comment on the congruence of NAEYC's positions and Bev's philosophy as described in her books. Unfortunately, as is often the case with the media, the edited program was overly simplistic, too sensationalistic, and unnecessarily polarizing. The edited footage of Bev's program left the viewer with the false impression that developmentally appropriate, play-oriented preschools promote children throwing paint at each other and running around in their underwear. The program appeared extremely chaotic and as depicted was certainly not a model of implementation of NAEYC's accreditation standards.

Further evidence of sensationalism was when the narration stated that the program "has no rules," but then proceeded to quote Bev as stating that the program has only three rules: You can't do anything to hurt other people; you can't do anything to hurt yourself; and you can't do anything to destroy property. Those three rules are well-known to many early childhood programs in which teachers find that these are the only rules needed. These same rules constitute the foundation for the Ten Commandments and the legal code of entire nations. To call this, "no rules," is simply inaccurate. However, it did appear that at least two of these rules were being violated on the tape segments shown, and there was no acknowledgment of adult intervention or the important role of adults in helping children comply with these important ethical principles.

Sue and our staff were extremely disappointed with the results of the program. We had seen it as an exciting opportunity to inform the public, and naively, we forgot that the purpose of programs like *20/20* is to entertain rather than to educate. The message of "developmentally appropriate practice" is complex and does not lend itself to oversimplifications, such as teach reading v. don't teach reading, have rigid unnecessary rules v. no rules, or do whatever you want v. do only what the teacher wants. The reality of developmentally appropriate practice is something in between these extremes. Every good early childhood program supports the development of literacy from infancy on; all good programs have clearly stated rules and use positive forms of guidance to help children behave constructively; and developmentally appropriate programs have a balance of child-initiated and teacher-initiated activity, both choice and structure.

In defense of the segment, we (and *20/20* and Bev Bos) have gotten a lot of mail and almost all of the reactions from the general public have been very positive. At least some parents realized that there were extreme examples, but they picked up the message that children should play in preschool and that they should like school and be excited about learning. Some parents wrote us impassioned letters about how negative their children's preschool experiences have been and how much they would like to find a better program for their children. In these cases, we clarified that none of our accredited programs would be exactly like the program depicted (we didn't want to mislead anyone who wants their children throwing paint!), but we did send out a lot of lists of accredited programs.

When NAEYC became more proactive in working with the media several years ago, our media consultant cautioned us, "If you have to control 100% of the message, don't seek media attention." Her words are among several lessons to be learned from 20/20 hindsight. Samples of some of the letters we have seen in response to the program are included on these pages.

Dear Sue,
I'm sorry that 20/20 did such a poor job with Bev's program. She has a terrific center and brings theory and practice together. It was evident from what they chose to show that the producer was not knowledgeable about the early childhood field.

Docia Zavitkovsky
Santa Monica, California
Former NAEYC President

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Validators and Quality Control

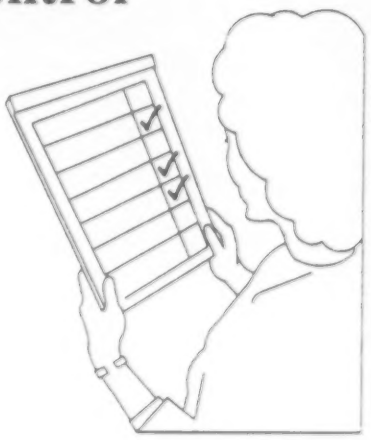
NAEYC's accreditation system would not be possible without the professional contribution of hundreds of validators who volunteer their time to conduct on-site visits. Because professionals are willing to volunteer, we are able to keep accreditation fees as low as possible for programs. Validators are the greatest strength of our accreditation system, but we also recognize that validators are potentially our greatest weakness. To minimize travel expenses, we must use a large cadre of validators, and it is difficult to ensure consistency of interpretation and performance among so many people. Maintaining quality control of the validator pool is one of our highest priorities and biggest challenges.

Some people rightfully question how well we can prepare validators in a 10-hour training. To accurately answer this question, it is important to understand what validators need to know. Basically, validators need to know 3 things; they need knowledge of early childhood education/child development, knowledge of accreditation procedures, and good communication skills. We realize that our 10-hour training cannot teach people early childhood education; a 10-day training could not accomplish that. Similarly, we do not expect to develop personal communication skills and a pleasant, non-judgmental personality in one day. In short, the goal of our training is limited to preparing people to apply accreditation procedures. We require that validators have professional qualifications, specifically college degrees in early childhood education/child development as a way to ensure adequate content knowledge. Of course, we realize that there will still be varying degrees of understanding and knowledge among individuals regardless of the type of qualifications they produce. To control for the potential negative impact of varying degrees of understanding or different interpretations, we designed the validation process so that the perspectives of both the validator and director are recorded and then evaluated by a 3-person commission.

Validators' personalities and communication skills may be even more important than knowledge of early childhood education to the success of the experience, but these are even harder to evaluate. However, the system does provide an opportunity for directors to evaluate the validators' performance and this evaluation inevitably reflects personal issues. Similarly, the comments of directors and validators in the validated Program Description usually reveal any personal biases or perspectives.

The best qualified validators are directors of accredited programs.

In short, we cannot guarantee perfection among validators, but the system has built-in checks and balances that work well. Despite the fact that we use many different validators, we receive relatively few complaints either about validator performance or about bad decisions. Nevertheless, we know there is room for improvement. One of the best indicators of an individual's knowledge of early childhood education/child development is the quality of the program



that individual provides. Therefore, we think that the best qualified validators are directors of accredited programs. In the future, we will give highest priority in selection of validators to individuals who have successfully achieved accreditation for a program. Directors whose programs are not yet accredited or who are seeking accreditation for their program, who are also interested in serving as validators, should first obtain accreditation before applying to become validators.

Individuals who have been trained as validators should not advertise their participation in validator training as an indication of the quality of a program with which they are associated. Only accredited programs may advertise an affiliation with NAEYC.

Requesting a Validation Visit?

Be sure to send the entire ***Program Description form***, completely filled out including the results of the Staff and Parent Questionnaires in Part 3. Also send the completed ***Classroom Observation Summary Sheet***, and your ***check*** for the validation fee made payable to NAEYC. If you don't send all of these materials the first time, your visit will be delayed.

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Douglas County Kindergartens Achieve Accreditation

Douglas County, Colorado recently achieved the distinction of being the first school district in the nation to earn NAEYC accreditation for all its kindergartens. Colorado First Lady Bea Romer personally congratulated the teachers, principals, and Superintendent Rick O'Connell at a reception in their honor at the Governor's Mansion on May 1.

This singular achievement represents several years of hard work on the part of many different people. Liz Grams, the kindergarten teacher who was specially assigned to coordinate the project, reported that about 4 years ago, the district started a transitional program for children who weren't quite ready for first grade. However, it soon became apparent that something was wrong, because too many children were being found not ready. Committees were formed to study the problem with the help of principals Clark Milsom and Cheryl Dunkle. The conclusion was that the regular kindergarten curriculum needed to change to become more developmentally appropriate and child-centered. The accreditation process was used as the focus for a thorough examination of practice and to validate that the effort was "on the right track." Parents were informed through a very informative and clearly written newsletter as well as through direct involvement in the classrooms as volunteers.

Liz Grams states that the essential ingredients in the success of this effort were supportive administrators and financing because, "It's expensive to buy blocks and playhouses." But she also points out that the teachers feel better about the change in approach, as the quotes above indicate.

The Academy also learned from Douglas County's experience. Since this was the first time so many public school kindergartens used our self-study materials, we identified the need for editorial changes that will communicate more clearly the applicability of the materials to public schools. We also found the need to clarify some validation procedures, and we realized that we need more validators who have kindergarten experience. We found it necessary to bring validators from as far away as Illinois to serve all the schools in Douglas County. So the adults at NAEYC and in Douglas County learned a lot from this pioneering effort, but undoubtedly the kindergarten children will benefit most of all.

"In this program you watch children prove that they are responsible learners and they can make independent choices."
—Diane Jacobin, kindergarten teacher, Sedalia Elementary School

"It is a joy to see the children using appropriate materials and being able to explore and be active rather than passive. Children in my classes are developing positive peer group relationships which enhance their ability to communicate effectively with others throughout their lives."
—Gwen Wilhelm, kindergarten teacher, Mountain View Elementary School

"I know that the people at NAEYC are the leaders in early childhood education. Getting their stamp of approval means we are child oriented. Children are developing a healthy way of learning and their best interest is always kept in mind."
—Betsy Glade, kindergarten teacher, Pine Lane Primary School

Special Resource for Accreditation

"A picture is worth a thousand words!" There are several thousand words in *Accreditation Criteria and Procedures*. Now get the picture with a new book from NAEYC, *Teaching Preschoolers: It Looks Like This . . . In Pictures* by Jeannette G. Stone (#305, $5). This wonderful book of photographs illustrates developmentally appropriate practice with picture captions directly from accreditation criteria. And, yes, we know—and we told Jeannette—we need similar books for infants, toddlers, and primary grades!

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Accredited Program Receives IBM Grants

An NAEYC-accredited program, Children's Home Society of Minnesota Rochester Child Care Program recently expanded to serve 13 infants and toddlers and obtained computer equipment and training for their preschool. Funding for this project was provided through the IBM Funds for Dependent Care Initiative administered by Work/Family Directions, a project described in a prior issue of *The Academy Update*. According to Director, Elaine Schmidt, the program was eligible for this grant because they are NAEYC accredited and because they serve a large number of IBM families.

The grant provided $10,000 to expand to a new facility and provide age-appropriate equipment for 5 toddlers and 8 infants. The program also received 2 IBM computers and software for the preschool as well as funds for 2 preschool teachers to attend training in New York. Teachers were trained to use computers with young children in developmentally appropriate ways. The grant funds will also pay for self-study and validation fees for the program to be reaccredited.

One of the most frequently asked questions about NAEYC accreditation is, "What are the benefits?" Elaine emphasized that she viewed obtaining this grant as a direct benefit of accreditation. She stressed that program directors need to understand that funders want to invest in quality and that accreditation stands for quality. The up-front investment in accreditation fees can be returned many times over when, like quality child care itself, it is viewed as an investment and not a cost.

Accredited Programs Seek New Challenges

NAEYC's accreditation is relatively new, and only a few programs in the country have experienced reaccreditation. Some programs have used reaccreditation to set higher goals and demonstrate continuing improvement. Here are a few creative examples.

Pre-kindergarten keeps growing

The pre-kindergarten program at Thomsen Estates Elementary School in Elkton, Maryland was recently reaccredited by NAEYC. Concerned that the validators would miss the improvements the program had made since achieving initial accreditation, teacher Marianne Falini prepared a Big Book, entitled "Look How We've Grown." The book contained specific examples of changes that occurred during the 3 years: comparative class schedules, photos of snack showing a change to family-style service, revised progress reports showing change from a checklist to a narrative style, photos of bulletin boards that had been teacher-made and commercial that had become child-made, and a new covered outdoor play area. The Big Book also listed 5 presentations that program staff had made at professional meetings at the county, state, and national levels. The Big Book was similar to compiling a portfolio of a child's progress over time. It documented the change and also validated the continuing growth of the program.

School-age child care seeks many perspectives

Linda Sisson, Coordinator of Kids Club in Edina, Minnesota (one of the first NAEYC-accredited school-age child care programs), shared a copy of a new program evaluation system developed to make their annual program evaluation a more enriching experience.

The evaluation has four parts: direct observations of each site by the site supervisor, three parents, a member of the school staff, and a program coordinator; a survey of all the parents; a staff survey; and a survey of the school personnel from the elementary schools served by the program. The surveys and observations are based on the program's goals. In parent involvement they look for mutual trust and respect, personal connectedness, shared goals and values, transitions, and parent participation. In guiding the children, they're evaluating adult coaching, adult role modeling, structure/choices/responsibility, the environment, learning skills, awareness of community, and guidance. It's the first time the child care personnel have sought input from school personnel in evaluating their program. As Sisson points out in her letter to school faculties, "Evaluation is designed to help make Kids Club the best it can be: for the kids, for the parents, for the Kids Club staff, and for the whole school community."

Where's Millie?

Adelle Baker of Elyria, Ohio had a delightful experience while conducting a reaccreditation validation visit at Strongville Coop Preschool. Prior to her visit, the children had been informed that "the people in Washington are sending someone." The morning of her visit Adelle was introduced to the children, "Boys and girls, this is the guest I told you would be visiting today. Say good morning to Mrs. Baker." One child came up and asked, "Mrs. Bush, are you going to read to us? Did you bring your book, *Millie*? Did you bring Millie with you? Did you come from Washington, D.C. today?" Before Adelle could explain, a little girl asked if she had dyed her hair brown.

Adelle's reaction to the confusion: "What a lovely and delightful compliment!" How can anyone doubt that children construct knowledge when we see examples like this every day?

CIGNA Benefits from Hands-On Learning

CIGNA Property and Casualty Companies, sponsor of NAEYC's insurance plans for child care programs, offered its underwriters a firsthand chance to learn about high quality child care and NAEYC accreditation. CIGNA underwriters participated in validator trainings held throughout 1991, and a special training is planned for CIGNA participants in September in Philadelphia.

Robert Giffin, CIGNA's Vice President for Marketing, explained that the opportunity for insurance underwriters to learn first-hand about the accreditation Criteria and process helped them to understand that "NAEYC-accredited programs are a superior risk." (That's good, for those of you who are unfamiliar with insurance lingo.) He also reported that the most valuable aspect of the experience was the opportunity to hear from and interact with the directors of accredited programs who are well represented in validator trainings.

The September training will include the largest number of CIGNA participants to date since they are sponsoring the training. But in order for this to be a really meaningful learning experience for them, we need to include an equal number of early childhood professionals who will be trained as validators. If you live in the greater Philadelphia area and are interested in applying to be a validator and attending the September training, contact Peggy Quinn at the Academy.

New Fees for Accreditation

Accreditation fees will increase effective July 1, 1991. Revised accreditation materials will be available in July 1991. Materials purchased prior to July 1991 will be valid for accreditation until September 1992. To calculate fees due before July 1, subtract $50 from the appropriate amount indicated.

Lessons from a Tragedy in Child Care

The Academy received the following letter from Nancy Jones, a validator and mentor, informing us of a terrible tragedy that occurred in a child care facility and alerting us to its implications for accreditation.

> "A4-year-old had been going through a couple of difficult weeks and his mom had been bringing him late in the day. Upon her departure, he acted out his frustration and (one day) his teacher took him to a front triangular room which had a long window to wave goodbye to her. This seemed to be satisfying him, when another mother and child entered at the front door into the foyer, just outside the door of the triangular room. The teacher stepped into the foyer to greet the incoming parent. Suddenly as the mom and teacher chatted, a noise was heard and they turned to see the TV falling from a rolling cart onto the boy in the triangular room. They rushed to it, but it was too late. It fell onto him, and severed a main artery. They administered CPR but the child died in about 30 minutes at a hospital which is 3 blocks away from the center. Fortunately, no children saw the accident."

Nancy shared this experience with us because of its implications for NAEYC accreditation. She stressed that directors and validators should check carefully on TV safety. "The TV had been on a tall rolling cart since 1978 in the center without an accident, but it only took one little boy's trying to climb up to turn it on for it to kill him. A number of schools and centers have these or some type of unsafe cart." This situation applies to criterion H-19 which states that "large pieces of furniture are securely anchored." Nancy also reminds us that, "It is important that children be attended visually by adults supervising them at all times" (H-7).

Many times when a program is cited for a safety violation, the explanation offered is, "nothing has ever happened before." The concept of risk management is to base our decisions, not on what has happened, but on what could happen. Anyone who evaluates the safety of a program, whether as a director or a validator, can learn from the tragedy described here and we appreciate Nancy Jones for bringing it to our attention.

Accreditation Fees Effective July 1, 1991

	Application	Validation	TOTAL
Level 1 (Fewer than 60)	$100	$250	$350
Level 2 (61-120)	$150	$400	$550
Level 3 (121-240)	$200	$500	$700
Level 4 (241-360)	$250	$600	$850

For each additional 120 children, each fee increases $50.

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Congratulations!

To NAEYC-accredited program, **Another Generation** in Sunrise, Florida for being selected by *Florida Trend* magazine for its 1991 "Trendsetter Award" as one of the 5 best companies in Florida. Among the other honorees were Disney World and Tropicana orange juice. According to the magazine, what all 5 companies have in common is that they "are of world class quality." Another Generation was among the first NAEYC-accredited programs in Florida and in the nation. Accolades to its founders, **Renee and Richard Goldman** for their "high-touch, high-tech approach to child care."

❧

To **Betty Mullinax** of Gainesville, Georgia who was honored as Head Start Teacher of the Year at the annual conference of the National Head Start Association in Virginia Beach, Virginia this spring. In accepting her award, Betty emphasized that she teaches in an NAEYC-accredited program, Pickens County Head Start. Betty's accomplishment reminds us all that good programs begin with good teachers. Our accreditation process places the greatest emphasis on what happens to children in classrooms and the classroom teacher is the major determinant of the quality of classroom interaction. Accolades to Betty and to all the other excellent teachers who work in accredited programs.

Reminders

Please address all correspondence about accreditation (especially Program Descriptions) to the attention of the **National Academy of Early Childhood Programs** (or simply the Academy), NAEYC, 1834 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20009. Sending us mail addressed to NAEYC in general will slow down your response.

❧

Validators: Please remember to send back the videotape, *Preparing for a Validation Visit* after you do a visit. We have a limited supply of these videos and they provide important refresher training for even the most experienced validators.

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Directors: When completing your Program Description, please identify your staff members on the Staffing Pattern and Staff Qualifications charts using the same first name and last initial. This will prevent confusion on the part of validators and commissioners.

ACADEMY *Update*

National Academy of Early Childhood Programs
A Division of the National Association for
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The ACADEMY Update

Early childhood professionals collaborating for quality

Volume 6 Number 1 Fall 1991

The Academy Update

Early childhood professionals collaborating for quality

The Academy Update is published by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, a division of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. The Academy administers the only professionally sponsored, national, voluntary accreditation system for early childhood centers and schools and school-age child care programs. The Academy's purpose is to improve and recognize the quality of care and education provided for young children in early childhood programs. *The Academy Update* supports this goal by providing early childhood professionals, including directors, validators, and commissioners, involved in accreditation with current information and feedback on the system.

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The Academy welcomes your comments. Address them to

National Academy of Early Childhood Programs
1834 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20009
202-328-2601 800-424-2460

naeyc

PS 023954

Revised Accreditation Materials Now Available

The newly revised accreditation materials are available as of September 1991. Any program that obtained self-study materials prior to September 1991 may still use those materials to conduct the self-study and request a validation visit through September 1992. If a program plans to seek accreditation after September 1992, the revised accreditation materials must be used. For a copy of the revised Criteria, send $7.00 to NAEYC and request #920, *Accreditation Criteria and Procedures of the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs*. Remember: any accreditation document with a publication date prior to 1991 will be valid only through September 1992.

Active validators (those who have conducted a validation visit within the last year) were sent a set of revised materials. Others will be sent new books when they agree to do a visit. During the next year, both the revised materials and the old materials will be valid for on-site visits. However, we assume that most visits this year will be to programs using the old materials. The materials used during the self-study are the materials that are validated so there should be no confusion.

ECCN To Begin Recognizing Congregations and Programs

Congregations and Child Care: A Self-Study for Early Childhood Programs Located in Houses of Worship, the fall 1991 revised edition of the materials developed by the Ecumenical Child Care Network as a companion to NAEYC's accreditation system, is now available. The ECCN self-study process is designed to help improve relations between any early childhood program and its host congregation. ECCN is now offering a recognition system for NAEYC-accredited programs that also successfully complete the ECCN self-study.

A mentor assistance program is also available as a benefit of the Ecumenical Child Care Network to help programs complete the self-study, *Congregations and Child Care*. Early childhood specialists experienced in working with programs related to houses of worship may apply to become mentors with ECCN. Programs seeking such assistance or ECCN recognition, should contact ECCN Self-Study Program, 475 Riverside Drive, Rm. 572, New York, NY 10115-0050. Call 212-870-3342.

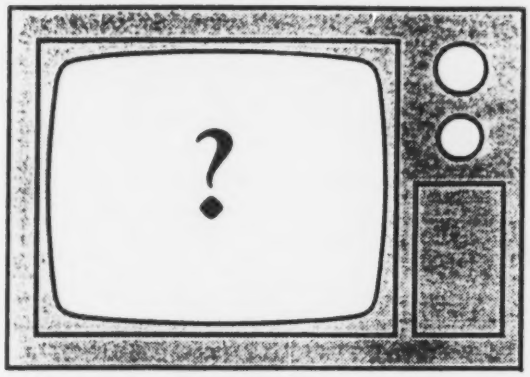
Child Care: Not Ready for Prime Time?

By now, it would be difficult to find someone associated with child care who did not see or at least hear about the child care exposé aired last summer on ABC television's, "Prime Time." Hosted by Diane Sawyer, the two-part program revealed the horrific conditions for young children in two different centers in New Orleans. Since the program aired, we have been asked by people throughout the country why NAEYC accreditation was not presented as an alternative for parents seeking quality child care.

Promoting high quality child care

For the record, NAEYC was contacted by "Prime Time" researchers while the story was being developed. In addition, many people who were interviewed for the story referred the reporters to NAEYC. The request we received from "Prime Time" was to help them identify "bad day care." We explained that we are in the business of finding good child care and we informed them about accreditation and our other resources. It was clear from the beginning that their objective was to tell a horror story. NAEYC did provide them with comparative licensing data and it is possible that this information led them to Louisiana, a state with minimal standards for child care.

NAEYC again tried to contact ABC during the week's interval before the follow-up program but were unsuccessful. Ironically, the House of Representatives Child Care Center, highlighted in the second program, is NAEYC accredited. The center was presented as a model and did show what high quality care looks like, but their accreditation status was not mentioned. Even in showing a good quality contrast, "Prime Time" managed to anger parents and early childhood professionals. One of the many letters we have seen that was sent to ABC was from a parent whose child is enrolled in the House of Representatives center. Bill Black wrote, "The House of Representatives Child Care Center provides excellent day care services with an operating budget based entirely on tuition and privately raised funds. To imply, as you did, that the quality is due to the benefit of a taxpayer subsidy is grossly unfair to the staff, who are underpaid, and the management, which provides high quality child care services on a very tight budget."



Recognizing the need to advocate for children

Many NAEYC members and directors of accredited programs were outraged about the program and the negative image of child care that it perpetuates. However, we feel that it should be put in perspective. All of us should be outraged that even one such program exists in this country, and all of us should use this powerful tool to advocate for better standards and training. The director who called a 1-year-old infant "spoiled" because he cried, demonstrated her complete ignorance of child development as well as other unattractive qualities before a nationwide audience. We must all work to ensure that people who know so little about what is good for children do not have an opportunity to control the lives of children. Some of this work has already taken place. Many early childhood professionals wrote letters to the editors of their local newspapers and some accredited programs were featured on locally produced follow-up programs.

Underscoring the importance of accreditation

The "Prime Time" episodes did not discourage us, but rather strengthened our commitment to the importance of accreditation. NAEYC's Accreditation Coordinator, Peggy Quinn, said that after watching the first segment of "Prime Time," her husband turned to her and said, "You must feel really good about what you do. After seeing that, it is clear how important your work is." And, of course, our work at Headquarters is not nearly as important as the work that goes on every day in programs around the country. It is hoped that through efforts such as accreditation, in the future all child care centers in the nation will be ready for prime time.

Teleconference on Appropriate Practice

The North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL) and PBS Elementary/Secondary Services are presenting a series of eight 1-hour interactive videoconferences called, "Schools That Work: The Research Advantage." Early childhood education will be the featured topic on a live teleconference program to air February 13, 1992. NAEYC and the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education are the content partners for this program that will spotlight schools that are moving to more developmentally appropriate curriculum and assessment practices in the early grades.

The satellite portion of the program will feature actual classrooms that successfully changed practice. These stories will be framed by panel discussions that put research principles in context and elaborate on classroom applications. Several NAEYC leaders will participate in the broadcast including Sue Bredekamp, Director of Professional Development.

This videoconference is offered at no charge to schools within NCREL's service area (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin). To be a downlink site or obtain more information, contact "Schools That Work," NCREL, 1900 Spring Road, Suite 300, Oak Brook, IL 60521 or call 708-571-4700. Individuals or organizations outside the NCREL region who wish to participate in the videoconference may contact PBS at 703-739-5402 for more information on fees and site locations. Colleges should call the PBS Adult Learning Satellite Service at 800-257-2578.

Good Quality Programs—Making the News

Time finds time for early childhood education

We hope you saw Stefan Kanfer's article "Good Things, Small Packages" in the July 29, 1991 issue of *Time* magazine. Too often, the media seem to present a negative image of the field, but this article was a real pleasure. It states, "In a time of gloom and doom about U.S. schools, early childhood education is something different, a cauldron of fresh and innovative approaches."

The article highlighted accreditation guidelines and told parents what to look for in a program for their child. In describing NAEYC, the article states "The 60-year-old association is early childhood's powerful lobby and accrediting body; its membership has doubled in the past decade and now numbers 77,000 professionals."

Unfortunately, it's rare to read an article that says things like, "Some of the best education in America goes on below the adult eye level" and "Listen closely and you can hear the future banging its spoon on the high chair." If you missed it, go to the library, make a copy, post it in your program and use it to give yourself a pat on the back.

"ABC News" Spotlights Accredited Program

North Side Child Development Center, an accredited program in Columbus, Ohio, hosted Peter Jennings and "ABC World News Tonight" for a live broadcast of the ABC evening news on June 19, 1991. The program was part of a series on children in poverty and crisis. North Side Child Development Center was chosen as the site for the live broadcast because of its diverse programming on behalf of children and families in poverty/crisis. This center was among the first NAEYC-accredited programs in 1986. It is the only child development program in Ohio available to working parents 7 days a week, 24 hours a day.

The broadcast was the culmination of 2 weeks of intense work including an interview with the agency's Executive Director, Mary Lynn Vaughan, and taped footage of the children, parents, and staff. The footage was shown during the live broadcast as an example of the high quality services available to very few children and families who are struggling to improve the quality of their lives.

According to Mr. Jennings, he rarely ventures from his studio to broadcast the news. He did so in hopes that the segment will help to make the issue of children and families in poverty and crisis a priority for funding nationally and in local communities.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice Comes to School-Age Child Care

Project Home safe, a national initiative addressing child care issues of children ages 5 through 13, sponsored by the American Home Economics Association and Whirlpool Foundation announces the publication of ***Developmentally Appropriate Practice in School-Age Child Care Programs.*** This new resource supplements and expands NAEYC's position statements on developmentally appropriate practice by providing guidelines for programs designed specifically for school-age children.

The publication presents seven principles of developmentally appropriate practice for school-agers that are based on developmental theory and research and the experience of school-age child care practitioners. Using a format familiar to NAEYC members, the document illustrates the principles with descriptions of appropriate and inappropriate practices.

The creation of the publication involved school-age child care practitioners and other experts across the country in a 2-year process to identify issues and build consensus. Kay M. Albrecht, Ph.D., senior partner of Child Care Management Associates of Houston, Texas led the initiative. Kay is also a validator, commissioner, and former member of the Academy Advisory Panel for NAEYC.

As a companion resource, Project Home Safe also published ***Quality Criteria for School-Age Child Care Programs.*** This document is based on the Academy's accreditation Criteria and much of it is incorporated in the revised accreditation Criteria. A third publication, **"Matching School-Age Child Care with Your Child's Needs,"** targets parents. This booklet provides guidance for parents in selecting a program for their child.

For a free copy of *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in School-Age Child Care Programs*, *Quality Criteria for School-Age Child Care Programs*, and "Matching School-Age Child Care with Your Child's Needs," send a postcard requesting the publications to AIS, Whirlpool Corporation, P.O. Box 405, St. Joseph, MI 49085. Please request only one copy per program site and duplicate additional copies as needed.

New Lapel Pins Available

A limited supply of gold-tone lapel pins featuring the Academy torch will be available to accredited programs in December. The price per pin is $2. To order, please contact the Academy staff. You will need to use your accredited program code number.

Impressions of Validators

During a validation vist, I went into a 5-year-old room and a little girl walked up to me and said, "I know who you are." I looked interested and said, "Who?" She said, "You're the exterminator!"

Shared by Martha Ross
Harrisonburg, VA

Resources from Gallaudet University Available for Integrating Deaf Children

Gallaudet University Child Development Center is concluding a 3-year model demonstration federal grant from the Department of Education on integrating deaf and hearing children in child care settings. By early 1992, a three-part videotape and accompanying manual will be available to assist all parties interested in integrating deaf children in child care. The videotapes will cover interagency collaborations, information on deafness, and classroom modifications.

If you are interested in integrating deaf or hard of hearing children into your child care program, Gallaudet University Child Development Center is preparing a directory of accredited child care programs and day schools for the deaf by regions. This will allow administrators from either agency to contact the other to establish an interagency collaboration using the Gallaudet University Child Development Center's model. Please send your program's name, address, and telephone number to Gail Solit, Director, Gallaudet University Child Development Center, 800 Florida Avenue, N.E., Washington, DC 20002.

International Conference on Child Day Care Health

An International Conference on Child Day Care Health, sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control, will be held in Atlanta, Georgia, June 15 to 17, 1992. This conference is co-sponsored by NAEYC and 11 other organizations including the Administration for Children and Families, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Public Health Association, and the National Center for Clinical Infant Programs. Attendees will have opportunities to exchange information, skills, knowledge, and experiences related to child day care health. Special emphasis will be placed on the prevention of infectious diseases and injuries; the impact of current practices and policies on infectious diseases and injuries; occupational health of child care workers; social and developmental issues in child care settings; and environmental health issues.

Disease and injuries in child care are issues not only for children but also for staff, family members, and society in general. These issues affect early childhood professionals on a daily basis. We hope that some directors of accredited programs and others will submit proposals for this important event. One of the subjects for which abstracts are sought is Impact of Regulations, Standards, Accreditation, and Training. We also hope many practitioners will be able to attend.

Conference registration is $40 if paid by May 8 and $50 on-site. Contact International Child Day Care Conference, PACE Enterprises, Inc., 17 Executive Park Drive, Suite 200, Atlanta, GA 30329. Call 404-633-8610, or FAX 404-633-8745.

NAEYC Launches National Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development

With the assistance of a 2-year start-up grant from Carnegie Corporation of New York, NAEYC launched the National Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development in September 1991. The Institute will increase NAEYC's capacity to work on projects designed to improve the quality and consistency of preservice and in-service preparation programs for early childhood educators. The goal of the Institute's work is to achieve a coordinated, articulated career development system for the field of early childhood education. An analogy will help clarify the purpose of the Institute: just as the accreditation system improves the quality of programs for children, the Institute will improve the quality of programs for adults.

A more complete description of the proposed work of the Institute appeared in the September 1991 issue of *Young Children*. A series of articles will appear in future issues of *Young Children* discussing the various issues that the Institute will confront.

The work of the Institute will consist of four major activities: standard-setting, program review, information sharing and dissemination, and leadership development. Among the standards or position statements that we will be working on during the next 2 years are standards for training curricula and trainers and completion of the draft Model for Early Childhood Professional Development. The Institute will also sponsor an annual conference specifically focusing on the issues of professional preparation and development. The first Institute Conference—"The Early Childhood Profession Coming Together"—will be held in Los Angeles, California, June 3 to 6, 1992.

Since much of this work has implications for accreditation, we will keep the accreditation community informed and involved. Please watch this newsletter and the journal for regular updates on the work of the Institute.

In Memoriam

Karen Butler

The Academy staff and her many colleagues were saddened by the recent death of Karen Butler, director of accredited programs in Arizona and Georgia, and active validator and mentor. According to her friend, Judy Crawford, "Karen especially loved her work with the Academy, and like many of us, found great reward and professional renewal in doing validation visits and meeting new folks in the field." Karen was eulogized by one of the fathers whose two children were served in the Phoenix School, that Karen directed. In his remarks, he stressed Karen's professionalism and work with the Academy, but more important he talked about what her work had meant to his family. All of us who work with and for young children should remember that our work has the potential to make a lasting impact just as Karen's did.

Take Part in a Survey of Benefits Provided to Staff in Accredited Programs

The Academy staff is occasionally asked about the specific benefit options provided in accredited programs. Usually this question arises when a director is reviewing the benefits offered in her or his program and seeks to improve the package. Although the accreditation system has a criterion for staff benefits (**E-4**), we do not collect specific information about the range and types of benefits plans offered. In addition, we have no information about the differences in benefits among teachers, assistant teachers, and directors.

Such a survey is being conducted by Patti Levine of the San Diego County Employees' Child Care Center. She requests that directors of accredited programs send her information on the benefits provided in their programs to teachers, assistant teachers, and directors.

Please complete the grid on the right and send it to **Patti Levine, San Diego County Employee's Child Care Center, 5201 Ruffin Road, Suite Z, San Diego, CA 92123.** She will share the results of her survey with those who participate and with the Academy. All information will be aggregated and confidential.

BENEFITS	Teachers	Assistants	Directors
Number of days sick/personal leave			
Number of vacation days			
Number of paid holidays			
Number of professional leave hours			
Percentage paid health insurance			
Percentage paid dental insurance			
Percentage paid vision insurance			
Percentage paid life insurance			
Percentage paid retirement			
Percentage paid training			
$ value of child care provided			
Yearly bonus			
Number days maternity leave and/or unpaid leave with right to return			
Birthdays off with pay			
Paid NAEYC membership			
Other			

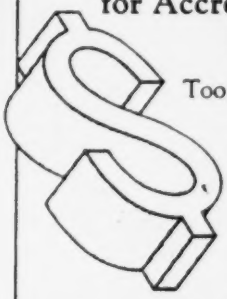
Mail to Patti Levine, San Diego County Employee's Child Care Center, 5201 Ruffin Road, Suite Z, San Diego, CA 92123.

We Are the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, *Not* CAP

Many people throughout the country still refer to the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs as CAP or the Center Accreditation Project. These are usually the people who go back a long way with us because the abbreviation CAP was used during the development of the system. Now that we have a fully operational accreditation system that serves diverse early childhood programs, it is time we stop using the phrase *Center Accreditation Project*.

More and more public school prekindergarten and kindergarten programs are seeking accreditation as are other types of schools that feel excluded when we talk about "center accreditation." Throughout the revised accreditation materials, the word *center* has been replaced by the more generic term, *program*, whenever feasible. It is hoped that this nomenclature will help communicate the inclusiveness of the accreditation system.

How to Obtain Funds for Accreditation Fees



Too often we hear that good quality programs are unable to seek accreditation because they cannot afford the fees. Sometimes this is an excuse not to do something that will require a lot of hard work and may uncover weaknesses in the program. But we also know that budgets in early childhood programs are very tight, especially in smaller programs. We understand that providing a high quality program does cost more. But we also believe that if a program is good enough to be accredited, the fees should not be the only barrier.

To help make sure that accreditation is available to every good program, the Academy staff developed a package of material entitled, "How to Obtain Financial Assistance for Achieving Accreditation." The packet contains suggestions for sources of financial assistance, a sample solicitation letter, and a sample proposal for obtaining support for accreditation fees. The proposal is easily adapted to solicit funds for program improvements to obtain accreditation. To obtain a free copy of this information, send a self-addressed, business-size envelope with two first-class stamps, to the Academy at NAEYC Headquarters and ask for the "financial assistance packet."

Preparing for a Validation Visit—

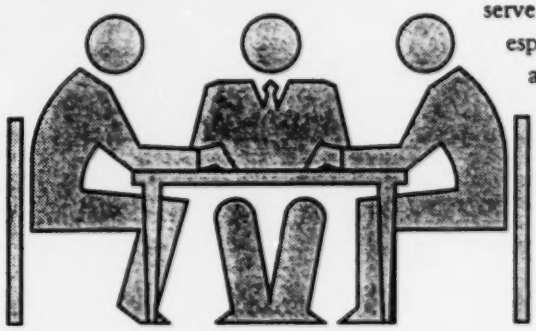
Important Information for Directors and Validators

The word *validation* is used to describe the on-site visit in the accreditation process for several reasons. First, the purpose of the visit is to verify the accuracy of the program's report of its compliance with the Criteria. But most important, the visit is designed as a validation, not simply an outside evaluation. The validator(s) observe and rate classrooms or compare evidence and then compare the ratings obtained to those reported by the program director. When these ratings agree, the criterion is validated. When the ratings differ, the criterion is not validated.

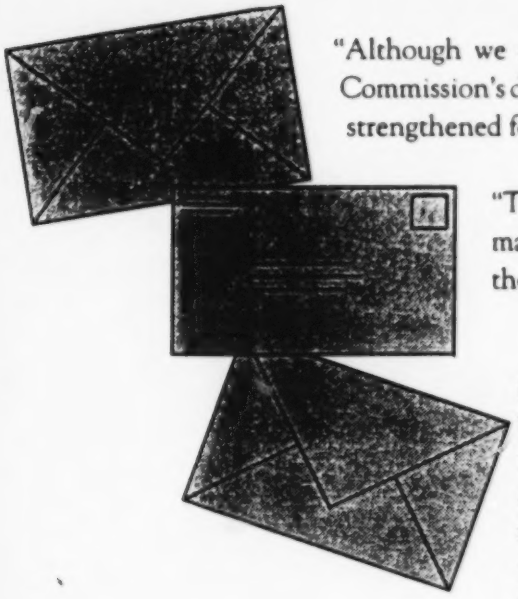
When Criteria are not validated, the validator's responsibility is to write comments for the commissioners that explain both the validator's rating and the director's rating. After discussing the criterion with the director, the validator should transfer the comments made in the observation book about what was observed to the Program Description. (Ordinarily, Commissioners do not review the observation books.) Then the validator should record the director's comments about the criterion. The director's comment should explain how the criterion was interpreted during the self-study, describe any changes that may have occurred since the self-study, or explain special circumstances. The Commissioners who review the Program Description and make the accreditation decision will read these comments very carefully.

Directors need to understand and exercise their power in this process. Too often directors become defensive and fail to respond with specific comments that present their interpretation of the criterion. In some situations, directors simply respond, "We meet our licensing standards or our regulations." The Commissioners usually do not accept licensing as a legitimate rationale for non-compliance with accreditation standards. Often directors respond with a general statement, such as "That's our philosophy." A more useful response would be to specifically explain what their philosophy is. Then, Commissioners will evaluate which interpretation, the director's or the validator's, demonstrates compliance with the intent of the criterion.

When validators select classrooms to observe, they should always observe different age groups. This is especially critical when infants and toddlers are served by the program. Sometimes, Commissioners will not make a decision about a program if the infant or toddler group has not been observed. This delays the decision while we arrange a revisit.



From our mail. . .



"Although we did not expect deferral, by reviewing and implementing the Commission's decisions and suggestions for improvement, our program has been strengthened for the best possible benefit of our children."

"The accreditation process was a very rewarding experience and made each of us reevaluate our own class and program to best meet the needs of each individual child."

Comments from directors whose programs were initially deferred

Dear Academy:

Word of our reaccreditation was just received and we would like to thank the Academy for making available such a marvelous program as accreditation. Although we could go on and on about the many facets that make the accreditation process invaluable, we think the main one for us this past year has been the direction it has given us. Our center has had stable staffing over the past 12 years since it was established, but last summer we experienced a significant staff turnover. It took a tremendous effort by all our staff members to learn, upgrade, adjust, persevere, and keep smiling. But everyone cooperated so beautifully to reach our goal of maintaining the quality we believe in. Without the objective of accreditation, we would have had a much more difficult time. We support accreditation and the standards it represents.

Signed personally by each member of the staff of Pulama Keiki Preschool and Day Care Center, Lihue, Kauai, Hawaii
Delores Kikuchi, Director

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The ACADEMY Update

Early childhood professionals collaborating for quality

Volume 6 Number 2 Winter/Spring 1992

PS 023954

The Academy Update

Early childhood professionals collaborating for quality

The Academy Update is published by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, a division of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. The Academy administers the only professionally sponsored, national, voluntary accreditation system for early childhood centers and schools and school-age child care programs. The Academy's purpose is to improve and recognize the quality of care and education provided for young children in early childhood programs. *The Academy Update* supports this goal by providing early childhood professionals, including directors, validators, and commissioners, involved in accreditation with current information and feedback on the system.

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The Academy welcomes your comments. Address them to

National Academy of Early Childhood Programs
1834 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20009
202-328-2601 800-424-2460

naeyc

Recognition and Support for Accreditation Grows

AS THE DEMAND for high quality programs increases, more support for programs to achieve accreditation is available from many different sources including local and state funding, and private organizations such as corporations, foundations, and churches. Here are some examples of initiatives that not only recognize the value of accreditation, but also help programs achieve it. If you know of other such examples, please send them to the Academy staff so that we can include them in future issues of *The Academy Update*.

Child Care and Development Block Grant—To date, we know of at least two states that are allocating some of their block grant funds for accreditation fees to improve the quality of child care. Both Kentucky and Virginia included mini-grants for accreditation in their state training plans that have been approved by the federal government. Both states provide funds for program accreditation by NAEYC or family child care accreditation by the National Association for Family Day Care. In Kentucky, contact Joan Tackett, Department of Social Services, 375 E. Main St., 5W, Frankfort, KY 40621, 502-564-2136. In Virginia, contact the Virginia Council on Child Day Care and Early Childhood Programs, 804-371-8603. If your state is using block grant funds for accreditation, please inform the Academy staff.

Massachusetts Department of Education—The Massachusetts Department of Education recently issued requests for proposals to establish the Early Childhood Quality Network. The project provides grants of up to $25,000 each to 20 local educational agencies and/or collaboratives that are interested in improving the quality of early childhood programs that integrate young children with special needs. Among the goals of the training project are to support the staff, administrators, and families in improving the quality of integrated, developmentally appropriate programs for young children and to support each program to become accredited by the Academy. The Department will also fund 20 teams of two consultants each to plan, implement, and evaluate programs that integrate young children with diverse abilities and backgrounds. Consultants are matched to the funded programs. For more information, contact Carol MacNeill at 617-770-7552 or Terri Heffernan at 617-770-7643.

California Department of Education—The Child Development Division (CDD) of the California Department of Education requires that each

Continued on page 2

ACCREDITATION *cont. from page 1*

agency that provides direct child care and development services either through centers or family child care homes conducts an annual self-study of each site or home. In addition, validation reviews, known as program quality reviews, are conducted by peer or consortium reviewers every 3 years. Both the self-study and the validation reviews use program quality review instruments prescribed by CDD. Beginning in 1991/92, agencies serving preschool-age only in center-based programs may choose between using CDD's self-study or NAEYC's accreditation self-study materials. (NAEYC does not accredit family child care homes.) Centers may choose either process to satisfy the state's requirements for self-study. According to the memorandum released from the California State Department of Education, "The Child Development Division has reviewed the NAEYC accreditation materials and finds them to be of high quality particularly for this age group."

Kentucky Department of Education—Grants are available to provide funds for equipment and training to intergenerational care programs in pilot sites across Kentucky. A maximum of $2,000 is awarded to any licensed program that provides before- and/or after-school care and/or summer care to children ages 4 to 13 in conjunction with care and assistance to Senior members of the community.

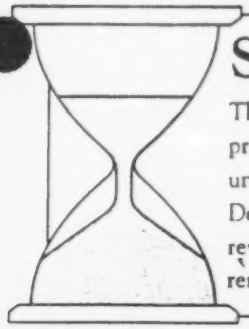
To apply for a grant, a program must be licensed and currently offering school-age child care in a setting that can also serve elders. Programs must be accredited by NAEYC or currently involved in self-study. The grant period ends July 31, 1992. For more information contact Ruth Fitzpatrick, Director, School Age Child Care Unit, 730 Capital Plaza Tower, Frankfort, KY 40601.

Hillsborough Co., Florida—The Project To Improve the Early Childhood Training Capacity of Hillsborough County (PITCH) includes funding for four activities: NAEYC accreditation; CDA training; establishing a resource library available to all child care staff; and publishing a newsletter for teachers and directors to inform them about innovative ideas in the field. Fifteen centers were selected to participate. One center is being used as a model because it is already accredited. The other fourteen centers have made a commitment to work toward accreditation. The goal of the project is overall program improvement. The project is funded by a start-up grant of $95,000. All the centers receive the project benefits at no cost. Contact Ellen Zinzeleto at 813-221-4785.

Michigan ECAP—The Voice of Educare, a group of early childhood professionals in Calhoun County, Michigan, received a grant from W.K. Kellogg Foundation to improve the quality of child care through the Early Childhood Accreditation Project (ECAP). The project will enable five child care programs, serving low to moderate income families and children at risk, to obtain NAEYC accreditation. In addition, funds will enable 40 providers to obtain a CDA Credential. To meet these objectives, ECAP will provide on-site training, consultants, matching funds for equipment and facility improvements, and professional support. Upon completion of the project each director will agree to mentor other community programs through the NAEYC process. CDA graduates will act as a support group for future CDAs. As of this date, six centers were selected for ECAP and two others agreed to pay their own fees to participate. Approximately 65 individuals expressed an interest in the CDA. All individuals applying for the CDA will be able to go through the process because state CDA scholarship funds will be available in addition to the Kellogg funds. For more information, call Jacque Eatman, ECAP Facilitator, 616-962-2525.

Presbyterian Church Child Advocacy Project—The Child Advocacy Project (CAP) of the Presbyterian Church of the USA awards grants of up to $5,000 to church-related child care facilities and programs. Grant funds are available to assist child care centers to seek NAEYC accreditation or recognition by the Ecumenical Child Care Network; to achieve state licensure; and for seed money to create and/or expand high quality child care. A total of $77,000 is being distributed through CAP. For more information, write Child Advocacy Project Grants, 100 Witherspoon Street, Rm. 3041, Louisville, KY 40202-1396, or call 502-569-5789.

Hawaii Community Foundation—The Early Childhood Education Demonstration Project, funded by the Robert E. Black Memorial Fund of the Hawaii Community Foundation is a 3-year demonstration project emphasizing quality, availability, affordability, parent participation, and public/private partnerships for support of program operations. Strategies to improve the quality of existing early childhood programs are participation in the NAEYC accreditation self-study process, in-service training for staff, and increases in staff salaries appropriate to education and experience. Three schools are participating in the project that includes an evaluation component based on ongoing observation and data collection, as well as a longitudinal study. Contact Susan Jones or Janis Reischmann, Hawaii Community Foundation, 222 Merchant Street, 2nd Floor, Honolulu, HI 96813, 808-537-6333.



September Deadline Is Fast Approaching!

The September 30, 1992 deadline for submitting a Program Description using self-study materials purchased prior to July 1991 is fast approaching. Self-study materials with a copyright date prior to 1991 are valid only until September 30, 1992. To avoid re-purchasing materials, directors need to submit completed Program Descriptions to the Academy postmarked by that date. After September 30, 1992, all programs must use the revised materials. Programs that have not achieved accreditation or purchased revised materials will be removed from our mailing list after September 1992 and will no longer receive *The Academy Update*.

Reminders to Validators

Please remember to transfer your comments on all non-validated criteria from the observation books into the Program Description. The Program Description is the only information that the commissioners receive about each program. Your ratings and comments along with the director's comments serve as the "eyes and ears" of the Commission.

When conducting a validation visit, be sure to observe the different age groups, especially the infants and toddlers because these groups are so different from those for older children.

Be sure to spend enough time observing in the classrooms. The Academy believes that the quality of the program is what happens to children in classrooms. Please make an effort to spend at least 1 to 1½ hours observing in each classroom during the validation visit.

The Academy staff express our deep appreciation to all validators for volunteering their time and sharing their expertise to improve the quality of life for children in our nation!

Update on Benefits Survey

The Fall 1991 issue of *The Academy Update* contained a survey on staff benefits in accredited programs. Patti Levine, the survey conductor, has received more than 150 responses so far. The results of the survey should be available by the end of the year. Thanks to all the directors who took time to participate in this worthwhile project.

Directors: The Spring Rush Is Here. . .

Once again we need to warn you about the spring rush. The number of requests for validation visits always increases at this time of year. It's important for you to remember these crucial scheduling points. The Academy requires 30 working days (6 weeks) to arrange a visit. If your program closes at the end of May, don't wait until April 30 to send in your Program Description.

Commissions meet every 8 to 10 weeks with meetings scheduled for May and June to accommodate the increased activity. Following Commission meetings, Academy staff must review decisions and prepare reports. If you want to receive your decision before the school year ends, you should send in your Program Description immediately. Programs are notified of the Commission decision in writing following the meeting. Please don't call the Academy to learn the decision. It slows down the process of arranging visits and preparing reports.

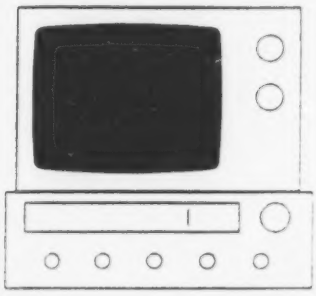
Be especially careful when you are asked to identify available dates for the visit. Once the visit is arranged, it is very difficult to reschedule. A processing fee of $50 is charged for visits that have to be rescheduled at the director's request.

We recommend that before sending the materials to the Academy, you make a copy of the completed Program Description. If the Program Description gets lost in the mail, you will be glad you have the extra copy. To request a validation visit, send the completed Program Description, the Classroom Observation Summary Sheet, and a check for the validation fee. Please send all material to the attention of the Academy or Accreditation. Remember that as of July 1991, accreditation fees have been increased. See the fee structure below for the correct validation fee.

Fees Effective July 1, 1991

	Application	Validation	TOTAL
Level 1 (Fewer than 60)	$100	$250	$350
Level 2 (61–120)	$150	$400	$550
Level 3 (121–240)	$200	$500	$700
Level 4 (241–360)	$250	$600	$850

For each additional 120 children, each fee increases $50.



New Video to Improve Children's Television

Action for Children's Television (ACT) recently released a new video entitled *It's the Law! How the Children's Television Act Can Make a Difference*. The 15-minute video is designed to help communities use the Children's Television Act to improve local television for children.

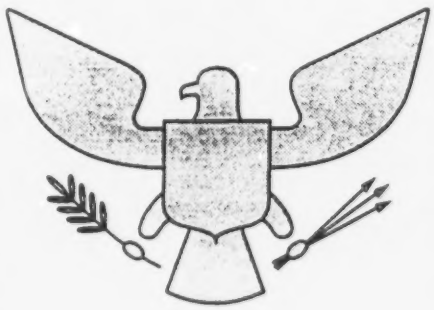
New requirements

The requirements of the 1990 legislation include (1) limited advertising during children's television programs; (2) provisions for station programming that address education and information needs of younger viewers; and (3) public access to TV stations' files, so that residents can obtain programming and advertising information related to young children.

The video provides background information for public forums on children's TV issues and for discussions between community residents and broadcasters about programming for young audiences. *It's the Law*. . . is available for $40.00 per copy including print materials. A discount price of $30.00 is offered to NAEYC members. Include a copy of your mailing label from *Young Children* when you place your order. Although Action for Children's Television has officially disbanded, these materials will be available through December 1992 (or while supplies last) from ACT, Sue Edelman, 20 University Road, Cambridge, MA 02138.

"Now that we are. . . we must continue to be"

The Child Development Services of the four branches of the U.S. military have set high goals for their programs. Within the next few years, plans are for all 420 military programs to achieve accreditation. To date, nearly 50 military child development programs are accredited. The Services met during the NAEYC Annual Conference last November. A panel of directors of accredited programs presented their "lessons learned" for other directors whose programs are currently engaged in the self-study process. Following are excerpts from the presentation by Polly Ferraro, Director of the Child Development Center at Port Hueneme in California.



"I welcome the opportunity to share about a subject very dear to me. . .NAEYC accreditation. It is important to me because I have seen the difference it can make in programs and in people, both in military and civilian centers.

"I am also the Liaison between my local AEYC group and the Academy and I often take the opportunity to speak about accreditation. At a recent meeting, as I was lobbying for involvement in the accreditation process, a colleague stated that she could understand my interest from the military point of view because the military's goal is to have all centers accredited. But she questioned what was in it for her; her program is full and has a waiting list. I quickly pointed out that accreditation is not the goal for the military. . .sustained high quality programs are their goal. NAEYC accreditation is the standard the military uses to measure program quality."

"I also added that she may not need accreditation to compete for children, but she does compete with the community for high quality staff. High quality people want to work in programs that are recognized as high quality programs."

Polly went on to relate her experiences of working toward accreditation at two different Navy installations. . . .

"We began the self-study on October 1 and we were ready! We had a stable staff, command support, and our program quality was improving. Then the world fell apart. One staff member collapsed with a heart attack. Two of our key staff left for jobs with more money and less stress. One of our administrators had to have major surgery and then the war in the Middle East began. But we reminded each other that the children needed high quality programs now more than ever and we helped each other stay on track. We became accredited on February 14. I had made a commitment to my staff that we would go to the California AEYC Conference wearing our green ribbons and we did."

"But the job is not over. Now that we are. . .we must continue to be. Our community looks to us and we must not let them down. Accreditation does make a difference. . .children deserve it and you can do it."

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Appeals Procedures Changed and Clarified

WHEN THE COMMISSION decides to defer accreditation of a program, the program has several options. The decision may be automatically appealed to another Commission; the program may appeal on the grounds that incorrect information was obtained on the day of the visit; or the program can make improvements recommended by the Commission and submit to another visit. In the past, programs that chose the latter option were required to develop a written Plan of Action to guide the improvement process that they also submitted to the Academy. After spending hours reviewing elaborate, lengthy Plans of Action, the Academy staff concluded that the procedure needed to be revised to ensure that the process continues to achieve its goal. We were concerned that instead of spending time actually making the improvements, too many programs became bogged down in producing the Plan of Action.

Program improvement is the Academy's goal

The purpose of the Plan of Action is for programs to do whatever is necessary to make the recommended improvements. In some cases, staff training will be needed; in other situations, the physical environment may need to be rearranged or a staff member needs to be reassigned to an older group of children. The Academy's goal is for the program *to improve*. The subsequent decision is based on whether the program achieves substantial compliance with the Criteria. The Academy evaluates compliance, not what the program did to bring about the change or what the program plans to do in the future. In short, our role is not to evaluate the Plan, but to evaluate its outcome.

Programs should develop a Plan of Action

In the future, programs will not be required to submit a written Plan to the Academy for review. Although we will not evaluate Plans, we urge programs not to bypass this step. We have observed that it is important for programs to develop a Plan to guide their work toward making improvements, just as our self-study documents guide programs to improve during the initial process. An effective Plan of Action should be developed *by* the program *for* the program. The Academy will continue to provide suggestions for developing a Plan of Action to assist programs as they organize for continued improvement.

The program may take up to 9 months to make the improvements. Once improvements are made, the program reports compliance to the Academy by completing another Program Description and the Academy arranges a verification visit. Following the visit, the Program Description is reviewed, and a decision is made within 6 to 8 weeks.

Special Thanks to Academy Mentors

From Alabama to Wyoming, Academy mentors are actively involved in assisting early childhood programs to achieve accreditation. Several years ago the Academy began the mentor system so that early childhood programs would have a local "accreditation expert" to share general information about the process and facilitate networking.

During the past 4 years, the Academy has trained more than 250 early childhood professionals to serve as mentors. Mentors are directors of accredited programs, validators, or both. These are people who can relate to the anxiety and stress involved in accreditation. Mentors' activities range from being a friend at the other end of the telephone to leading a support group of directors. Most often, mentors present information sessions on accreditation at state and local conferences.

Mentors are available to assist programs involved in self-study. If you would like to contact a mentor, call Stacey Stricklin at the Academy (800-424-2460 or 202-328-2601). Although mentors are available in every state, one may not be located in your community.

WANTED!

ACADEMY MENTORS

Are you a director of an accredited program or an experienced validator? The Academy is looking for interested, knowledgeable professionals to inform others in their communities about accreditation or to facilitate director support groups. You may already be engaged in mentoring. If so, we can provide additional resources to assist you in this process and to ensure that accurate information is communicated. The Academy will offer mentor orientation sessions at the the Midwest AEYC Conference on May 7 and during the NAEYC Annual Conference in New Orleans next November. If you are interested in serving in this voluntary position, contact Stacey Stricklin at the Academy—800-424-2460, ext. 263.

Accreditation Is All About Children

The drawing at right is by Lesa Anne, a 4-year old who is enrolled in an accredited program for "at-risk" children in Illinois. When Lesa Anne first entered the program last September, she was identified as potentially at risk for school failure and had difficulty handling the child-initiated activity provided in her developmentally appropriate program.

Lesa Anne's drawing of herself in the writing center, after 3 months of experience in a high quality program, demonstrates much about her development and learning. Look carefully at how she depicts the abstract concept of writing; the ideas are going from her head into the book she is writing. She also forms recognizable letters as she practices writing. Her portrait of herself has great detail including pigtails with hair ribbons.

by Lesa Anne (4-years old)

Too often we hear the opinion that "at risk" children are incapable of coping with the stimulation and variety of activities offered in developmentally appropriate classrooms. However, the experience of children like Lesa Anne contradicts this view. Lesa Anne's progress didn't just happen. Her teacher worked with her to help her learn to make choices and to ensure that she gained full benefit from the many literacy-enhancing experiences provided in her classroom. Her teacher's success is vividly portrayed by Lesa Anne herself in this wonderful portrait of the artist/author. We are grateful to Lana Hostetler, NAEYC President, for sharing Lesa Anne's artwork with us and reminding the Academy staff that we are really working for the Lesa Annes of the world.

Houston's Accredited Programs Go on Tour!

The Houston Area Association for the Education of Young Children sponsored their second annual tour of Houston's nationally accredited early childhood programs on February 7, 1992. The Houston metropolitan area is the proud home of approximately 80 NAEYC accredited programs. Due to time constraints, 24 programs were selected for the tour. Attendance (165 people) doubled from last year.

The Affiliate used the opportunity to promote accreditation by contacting the governor's and state senator's offices about the tour and received a positive response. Karen Hughes, program chair, stated that the event serves two purposes: it promotes and encourages accreditation and it provides an excellent fund-raiser for the Houston AEYC.

Guidelines for Older Adults Working in Child Care

Among the findings of the most recent studies related to the demand and supply of child care is the significant increase in both group size and staff-child ratios across all ages of children in out-of-home child care arrangements. Research continues to show that positive outcomes for children are directly related to sufficient numbers of staff with specific training in child development/early childhood education. Among the sources of potential staff members to ease the staffing crisis are older adult child care workers. To ensure that older adults obtain appropriate training, placement, orientation, and supervision, and experience adequate working conditions in child care programs, Generations Together produced *Guidelines for the Productive Employment of Older Adults in Child Care*. NAEYC's Governing Board recently endorsed the *Guidelines* after reviewing their congruence with other position statements of the Association, including our accreditation Criteria.

A limited number of copies of the just-released *Guidelines* are available for $3.00 from Generations Together, University Center for Social and Urban Research, University of Pittsburgh, 131 University Place, Suite 300, Pittsburgh, PA 15260.

Generations Together is currently completing a manual for practitioners as a companion to the *Guidelines*. NAEYC would appreciate receiving feedback on your use of this resource and your interest in the forthcoming manual. Send responses to NAEYC's Information Service.

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Validator Trainings Planned

Validator training will be held in conjunction with several state and regional conferences this year. If you were previously trained as a validator and need to be retrained, you may attend one of these trainings. Qualified individuals who are interested in applying to be validators should call or write the Academy for an application. Directors of accredited programs who have college degrees in early childhood education/child development will be given priority. All participants must register in advance. Following is a list of trainings to date. Others will be planned as needed.

May 1—New England AEYC, Manchester, New Hampshire

May 7—Midwest AEYC, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

September 24—Florida ACUS, Orlando, Florida

October 9—Oregon AEYC, Portland

October 16—NJAEYC, Somerset, New Jersey

November 4—TAYC, Nashville, Tennessee

November 10—NAEYC Annual Conference, New Orleans, Louisiana

The Early Childhood Profession Coming Together

First Annual Conference of NAEYC's
National Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development

June 3–6, 1992
The Biltmore Hotel
Los Angeles, California

For registration information, call the Institute at NAEYC Headquarters—800-424-2460.

A Message on Feedback

One of the most frequent comments we hear from directors after the validation visit is, "I expected more feedback from the validators." We understand that the accreditation process involves a lot of hard work. Directors and staff look forward to the day of the validation visit as the culmination of all that effort. It can be disappointing when the visit ends without a feeling of closure. Directors want validators to praise their efforts and share their personal opinions about the program. On the other hand, validators tell us how difficult it is to remain objective during the course of a validation visit. Giving positive comments is easy; it's hard to be the bad guy. It's much easier to say nice things and be encouraging.

Both validators and directors need to understand the process and what the validators are asked to do. Validators are asked to objectively rate the program against the Academy's Criteria. Validators may give positive feedback, but they should do so in relation to how well the program meets the Criteria. They should avoid subjective comments as much as possible and they should not put themselves in the role of consultant to the program. When a director says, "We expected the validator to comment about how warm our staff was with the children or how smooth our transitions were..." she is asking for the validator to make subjective comments. Too many remarks like these could raise false expectations about the decision. Suppose there were many unmet criteria and the validator was just trying to find something to compliment to make the director feel better?

Directors need to remind themselves and their staff members that the validation visit is not the end of the accreditation process. The validator visits the program to verify that all information is correct. The validator does not make the accreditation decision; her or his role is to remain objective and unbiased. The Commission makes the final, subjective judgment after considering all the evidence from the information gathered by both the program and the validator(s).

Model Health and Safety Standards Now Available

After several years of thorough research, the model health and safety standards for child care developed by the American Public Health Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics are now available. *Caring for Our Children—National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs* is the most comprehensive source of information available for the development and evaluation of health and safety aspects of child care centers and family child care homes for children from infancy through age 12. The guidelines are designed for practical use and each guideline includes a statement of rationale. The APHA/AAP standards are referenced throughout NAEYC's accreditation Criteria where more specific information may be needed to interpret a criterion. This document is an important reference work for every Resource and Referral agency and certainly for large child care agencies. The document (Stock No. 054M) may be ordered for $50.00 plus shipping from APHA Publications Sales, Department 5037, Washington, DC 20061-5037. Discounts are available to APHA members.

From Our Mail

Dear Academy Staff:
Doing this self-study has been the most rewarding experience for my staff and me. It was very time consuming, but worthwhile because we were able to take a very close look at the Program as well as ourselves. We were able to involve the parents and get some constructive feedback from them as to how they view the care that their children were receiving. . . .

—Comments from a program awaiting a Commission decision

I just received my copy of the revised edition of the self-study materials! It's fantastic! After going through this process myself in 1986,. . .I am delighted to see how specific and detailed each criterion has become. . . . Less will be left to interpretation and many more items will truly become observable behavior. As a validator and mentor for NAEYC, I certainly appreciate these enhancements. I personally would like to commend all parties involved in making the best—better!

Sincerely,
Joyce Anderson

Needed: Expert Practitioner/Authors

If you haven't already, be sure to read the March 1992 issue of *Young Children*. NAEYC's peer-reviewed journal always has many articles of interest to individuals who are involved in the accreditation system, but this month's issue was a treasure-trove. Many people are surprised to learn that the most frequent complaint the Academy receives about accredited programs is about the manner in which an individual child's enrollment is terminated. This situation is thoroughly addressed in an article entitled "Unhappy Endings" by Nancy Jacobs, who supervises an accredited program. It's not the type of subject we often read about, but is an issue that every program faces.

Also in this issue is an excellent article by James Christie and Frances Wardle addressing the question, "How much time is needed for play?" Too often validators observe in programs in which playtime is provided from 7:00 to 9:00 a.m. or only outdoors. This article provides very specific guidance about how much time is needed for play to be an effective learning experience. Articles by Joanne Hendrick and Polly Greenberg describe how developmentally appropriate practice prepares young children for life in a democratic society.

Young Children is always in need of theoretically sound, research-based articles about practical issues confronting classroom teachers and program administrators. We could all learn from staff in accredited programs and validators who deal with these practical concerns everyday. Think of yourself as an author and submit an article to *Young Children* or an idea for this newsletter.

(If you have an outline of an article for *Young Children* and would like to discuss it with NAEYC's Publications Director, Polly Greenberg, you can call her at 800-424-2460 or 202-328-2615.)

The ACADEMY *Update*
National Academy of Early Childhood Programs
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